BREAKING WORDS:
TOWARDS A MALAGASY ORAL THEOLOGY OF HOMILETICS

By

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Submitted in fulfillment of the academic requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Religion and Theology,
University of Kwazulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg, South Africa

2010

Supervisor

Professor Jonathan Draper
Declaration

I, Kevin A. Ogilvie, PhD candidate, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Faculty of Humanities, Religion and Social Sciences, School of Religion and Theology, hereby declare that unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, this thesis is my own original work and shall only be submitted for the purposes of the above mentioned degree.

_________________________________  ____________________
Kevin Ahnfeldt Ogilvie               Date

As the supervisor, I hereby approve this thesis for submission

_________________________________  ____________________
Professor Jonathan Draper            Date

University of Kwazulu-Natal
2010
Abstract

This study uncovers the underpinnings of a Malagasy Lutheran oral theology of homiletics. Using original sermons collected in the field from a cross section of Lutheran preachers and places in Madagascar this study is anchored in contextual materials. To the close readings of these materials the author brings anthropological, textual and Biblical exegetical methodologies for their analysis. Making the distinction between oral and literate composition and cultures, using the theories of Werner Kelber, Walter Ong, Eric Havelock, et al., the author demonstrates the oral structure of the socio-intellectual milieu of Malagasy society. In order to display this mindset in Malagasy theological thinking, this study sets the Malagasy exegesis of the Longer Ending of Mark’s Gospel against the horizon of Kebler’s theory regarding the written gospel as a “parable of absence” in the main body of the Gospel of Mark. This study makes manifest the Malagasy theology of presence, an oral theology. Framing his research with the Fifohazana (Revival) movement, the author briefly surveys the history of Christian missions in Madagascar. This history serves to demonstrate Western missionary literate culture and theology entering into dialogue with the oral culture of Madagascar and the subsequent indigenization of Christianity in the Fifohazana movement. This Fifohazana serves as a paradigm of the Malagasy homiletic and oral theology. Key leading figures of this movement, Rainisoalambo and Volahavana Germaine (Nenilava) are discussed. Extensive appendices of original Malgasy material, while not forming part of the body of the thesis, are provided for reference.
Mita be tsy lanin’ny mamba.
Many [people] crossing [a river] together are not eaten by crocodiles.

Tondro tokana tsy mahazo hao.
One finger cannot get lice.

Acknowledgements

Any work of this scope demands collaboration, cooperation, and assistance from many people. Some contribute knowingly and enthusiastically; some contribute without ever knowing of what value they were. I wish here to acknowledge the help I have received and to express my deepest gratitude.

I never saw myself as a writer. Indeed, I feared writing because I came to Davidson College ill prepared as an undergraduate in 1974. In terror that I might just flunk my second year, I turned to an English professor I knew from his help in getting me into a Norwegian language course. He insisted that I take his senior level seminar on Scandinavian literature. I was petrified, a sophomore in a senior class. Three papers, with rough drafts turned in at least six times before the final draft, each one coming back blood red with corrections. He taught me to write. I took every course I could from him. His office was a mess – papers everywhere – but he knew exactly where every student’s paper was. Few teachers have such dedication to their students. Dr. Gil Holland sits on my shoulder every time I sit to write, and I will never be able to thank him enough.

My fellow missionaries in Madagascar, the Rev. Drs. Cynthia and Mark Rich, came back from a trip to South Africa excited about a doctoral program in Pietermaritzburg. They cajoled me into doing this and convinced me I could. Indeed, for much of my time in the program, Cynthia was a fellow student. I owe them much for their support – and I suppose I should return Mark’s copy of Kelber’s *The Oral and the Written Gospel!* Other missionaries
also encouraged me and pointed me in great directions: Dr. Leoni Bouwer and Bev Erasmus, South African linguists with Wycliffe Bible Translators; Betty Wilken, who journeyed with me to Soatanana; the Rev. Malvin Tomren of the Norwegian Mission Society (NMS), who has written the best Homiletics textbook available in Malagasy; Linda Bårdesen of the NMS, who worked hard to translate a great deal of material from Norwegian (and old typeface at that!); and retired missionaries, but still active, the Rev. Oliver and Gene Carlson, who graciously consented to be interviewed. The Rev. Nils Kristian Høimyr, archivist for the NMS and a former missionary child and missionary himself, was a great resource and a wonderful help during my research in Stavanger. Øyvind Dahl also of NMS and the Centre for Intercultural Communication in Stavanger gave me great insight into Malagasy communicative culture.

When you know yourself a stranger, perhaps even frightening to some because of your skin color, your size and your blue eyes, you appreciate warm hospitality all the more. The Malagasy welcomed me into their homes and into their hearts. Some are like family to me and one is now my son, Heritiana Asimbola Ogilvie, better known as Hery. His father has not been as attentive to all his wants and perhaps not all his needs these several years but I hope and pray that he will celebrate his heritage with great pride as I have come to love and respect it. I can never tell him how proud of him I really am.

The Rev. Dr. Lotera Fabien, Dean of the Lutheran Graduate School of Theology in Fianarantsoa (SALT) helped me greatly with tracking down a sermon by Nenilava and providing me with other resources. The Rev. Zaihità, a fellow PhD student at Pietermaritzburg and a former faculty member with me at the Regional Lutheran Theological Seminary at Bezaha was an invaluable conversation partner. Mr. Raderalazasoa Léon Pascal,
my administrative assistant in Antananarivo, who knows everyone and can find anything and
who sat patiently explaining proverbs and other cultural material to me. Miss Razafindravao
Honorine, my housekeeper in Antananarivo who loves my son and cared for him as if he was
her own, who created space for me to work and who did her own share of explaining to me
what words mean. Indeed, from her I know experientially what fihavanana is.

In the Works Cited list you will find a list of people from all over Madagascar who
agreed to share with me their sermons and to talk about their craft. These are amazing
pastors and laypeople whose witness to the Gospel is deep and profound. Some of the
preachers were my students and now they are my teachers! I am humbled by the honor they
all did me and I hope that I have honored them by the work that follows these pages.

I am grateful to the Division for Global Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in
America (ELCA) for funding much of my study and giving me the time to work on it and to
the Trexler Fund of the Upstate New York Synod of the ELCA for supporting a trip to
Norway for research.

At the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal Pietermaritzburg I have met some amazing people
and am honored to call them friends. Dr. Sarojini Nadar, formerly a fellow student and a
great friend. The late Rev. Dr. Steve DeGruchy and his wife, Marion Loveday, who spent
time with us in Madagascar and ever after welcomed me in their home on my infrequent
visits. Steve’s presence is sorely missed.

Friends, students and colleagues at the Lutheran Theological Seminary Saskatoon
(LTS) have cheered me on, pointed me in great directions, advised me on resources, nudged
me when I needed it. So I thank my former professor and dean, the Rev. Dr. Faith
Rohrbough, President emerita of LTS; Dr. Pamela Giles, the Director of Advancement
Services who, with her PhD in English and her incredible skills on the computer, has helped me format this work and saved my work from computer crashes; the Rev. Dr. Gordon Jensen, Professor of Reformation History and Theology, whose knowledge of Luther is exceeded only by his gracious support; and Debbie Theissen, my administrative assistant, who kept the wolves at bay so I could write! Ravelojaona Olivier,¹ a second-year student at LTS, and his wife, Holy, as my assigned research assistant, spent hours re-formatting and correcting spelling in all the transcriptions of the Malagasy sermons and who corrected my Malagasy and even a number of my translations. Misaoitra indrindra, tompoko!

Thirty-two years ago I met the Rev. Dr. Jann Boyd. We graduated together from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia in 1982 and saw neither hide nor hair of each other from that time until I arrived in Saskatoon in 2006. Who would have guessed that she could fill my heart … and my head … with so much! She has been my chief cheerleader, my support even to cooking a meal or washing the floor to keep me writing. She has been the best conversation partner, a resource of ideas and often the best kick in the pants when I deserved it. She is the meaning of grace for it is totally undeserved.

Last, but not least, I wish to thank my supervisor, Professor Jonathan Draper who is that rare combination of a great scholar, an amazing teacher, and someone I will cherish always to call friend. I have learned much but what I have learned is exceeded by the

¹ Malagasy names do not follow the custom of many Western countries with a patronymic and a ‘first name.’ Sometimes there is only one name. Sometimes there can be three or four. The name may point to something significant at the birth of the child for example, “Rasolondraibe” (The-one-who-replaces-grandfather) may indicate the child was born after a death. Some names may point to a hope: “Fahamendrenomenandriamanitra Sophia LeSage,” was the name a friend of mine gave who hoped his son would study. The name means “Wisdom-given-by-God (Malagasy) Wisdom (Greek) The Wise (French).” I have attempted to keep name word order as Malagasy would know it. Where bibliographic references invert names, one should not be too confused.
hospitality with which Jonathan and Marion, his wife, have received me on every trip. The Malagasy say, “God will have to reward you for nothing I have to offer could repay the debt.”

Feast of Mary Magdalene, Apostle
July 22, 2010
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
# Table of Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................ iii
Acknowledgements ......................................................................................................................... iv
List of Illustrations .......................................................................................................................... xii
List of Abbreviations ....................................................................................................................... xiii
List of Preachers .............................................................................................................................. xiv
Map of Preachers ............................................................................................................................. xvi
Preface ............................................................................................................................................ 1

Chapter 1: Methodological Considerations ...................................................................................... 5

Chapter 2: The Conquest by the Spoken Word ................................................................................. 32
  Other Revival Leaders .................................................................................................................... 70
  Volahavana Germaine (Nenilava) ................................................................................................. 73
  Conclusion ...................................................................................................................................... 88

Chapter 3: The Conquest of the Written Word: The Battle Revisited ........................................... 91
  The Ending of Mark’s Gospel .......................................................................................................... 92
  The Paradox of a Written Parable .................................................................................................. 97
  The Other Endings of Mark’s Gospel ............................................................................................... 106
  The End Changes (Almost) Everything ......................................................................................... 108
  Conclusion .................................................................................................................................... 114

Chapter 4: The Ascension Day Sermons ......................................................................................... 116
  The Preachers ............................................................................................................................... 119
  The Longer Ending of Mark’s Gospel in Malagasy Context ............................................................ 120
  The Ascension Day Sermons ........................................................................................................ 125
  Conclusion .................................................................................................................................... 158

Chapter 5: The Easter Sermons ....................................................................................................... 159
  The Ending at Verse 8 .................................................................................................................... 160
  Inter-textuality as an Oral Marker ................................................................................................. 170
  Rehearsing Key Loci ..................................................................................................................... 172
  Liturgical Setting ......................................................................................................................... 174
  Conclusion .................................................................................................................................... 178

Chapter 6: Western Preaching ......................................................................................................... 180
  Homiletic Textbooks ..................................................................................................................... 180
  Some Representative Sermons ...................................................................................................... 190
  Conclusion .................................................................................................................................... 200

Chapter 7: Breaking Words ............................................................................................................ 203
  Reading as “Breaking Words” ........................................................................................................ 203
  Faith Comes By...? ......................................................................................................................... 213
  Kabary: Proclamation that is not a Sermon ................................................................................. 223
  The History of Kabary .................................................................................................................. 224
  Conclusion .................................................................................................................................... 244

ix
Appendix 3: Ascension Day Sermons with Translation ......................................................... 1
  1. Raharison ......................................................................................................................... 1
  1. Raharison (Translation) ................................................................................................. 5
  2. Loubiens Fidinantenaina Claudias ................................................................................. 9
  2. Loubiens Fidinantenaina Claudias (Translation) ........................................................... 14
  3. Georges .......................................................................................................................... 19
  3. Georges (Translation) .................................................................................................... 21
  8. Dada Rajasoa ................................................................................................................ 23
  8. Dada Rajasoa (Translation) ........................................................................................... 23
  10. Rakotonomenjanahary Danielson ............................................................................... 32
  10. Rakotonomenjanahary Danielson (Translation) .......................................................... 38
  14. Rakotoniaina Jean De Dieu ......................................................................................... 44
  14. Rakotoniaina Jean De Dieu (Translation) ..................................................................... 47
  17. Rasololonahary Rodin Emmanuël ................................................................................ 50
  17. Rasololonahary Rodin Emmanuël (Translation) .......................................................... 53
  21. Randrianirina Dieu Donne ........................................................................................... 55
  21. Randrianirina Dieu Donné (Translation) ...................................................................... 61
  30. Raharinomenjanahary Léonie Charline .................................................................. 66
  30. Raharinomenjanahary Léonie Charline (Translation) ................................................... 71

Appendix 4: Additional Ascension Day Sermons ................................................................. 76
  5. Randriatsarafara Jean Gaston ..................................................................................... 76
  7. Randrianandrasana Dieu Donné .................................................................................. 78

Volume II: Supporting Documentation

Appendix 7: Appropriation of Cultural Symbol – Nenilava ............................................. 277
Glossary .............................................................................................................................. 278
Works Cited ....................................................................................................................... 281
  Sermons ......................................................................................................................... 281
  Interviews ....................................................................................................................... 281
  Public Lecture .............................................................................................................. 282
  Seminar Presentation .................................................................................................... 282
  Secondary Sources ....................................................................................................... 282

Conclusion .......................................................................................................................... 249
Appendix 1: Questionnaires .............................................................................................. 264
  Questionnaire on Preaching ....................................................................................... 264
  Questions for Preachers ............................................................................................... 268
Appendix 2: Release ........................................................................................................... 269
Appendix 6: Annual Meeting Sermon .............................................................................. 271
  Mama Volahavana Germaine, Nenilava ..................................................................... 271
  Mama Volahavana Germaine, Nenilava (Translation) .................................................. 274
Appendix 7: Appropriation of Cultural Symbol – Nenilava ............................................. 277
Glossary .............................................................................................................................. 278
Works Cited ....................................................................................................................... 281
  Sermons ......................................................................................................................... 281
  Interviews ....................................................................................................................... 281
  Public Lecture .............................................................................................................. 282
  Seminar Presentation .................................................................................................... 282
  Secondary Sources ....................................................................................................... 282
Appendix 5: Easter Sermons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Rasamimanana Raymond</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Ranaivozava Samuël Jonah</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Randrianirina Solofoson Gilbert</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Randriatsarafara Jean Gaston</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Andrianantoandro Léon Fidèle</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Rahantanirina Vastyor</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Rakotoniaina Jean De Dieu</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Laha Jean Noël</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Masitsara Raymond</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Davidson</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Rakotonomenjanahary Danielson</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Jacquis</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Dada Rajosoa</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Andriamongolandy</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Randrianaivo Jean Chrysotom</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Randriatsarafara Jean Gaston</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Randialaisana Jean G.</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Georges</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Loubiens Fidimanantena Claudias</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Raharinomenjanahary Léonie Chardine</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 5: Easter Sermons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Rasamimanana Raymond</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Ranaivozava Samuël Jonah</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Randrianirina Solofoson Gilbert</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Rakotoniaina Jean De Dieu</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Andrianantoandro Léon Fidèle</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Rahantanirina Vastyor</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Rakotoniaina Jean De Dieu</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Laha Jean Noël</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Masitsara Raymond</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Davidson</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Rakotonomenjanahary Danielson</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Jacquis</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Dada Rajosoa</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Andriamongolandy</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Randrianaivo Jean Chrysotom</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Randriatsarafara Jean Gaston</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Randialaisana Jean G.</td>
<td>205</td>
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<td>Raharinomenjanahary Léonie Chardine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Illustrations

Figure 1: Three revival leaders in Soatanana................................................................. 46

Figure 2: Outside the home of the raiamandreny of the independent Soatanana movement with photograph of Rainisoalambo for presentation......................................................... 67

Figure 3: Volahavana Germaine (Nenilava)..................................................................... 74

Figure 4: Lutheran Church at Ampitanke with village elders in rear............................... 204

Figure 5: Hazomanga in Tongobory, Tulear Province ..................................................... 210

Figure 6: Andrianampoinimerina by Ramanankirahina, c. 1905....................................... 227

Figures 7 and 8: Queen Ranavalona III's last kabary at Andohalo, Antananarivo, 1895 .... 229
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DIEM</td>
<td>Dikanteny Iambonona Eto Madagasikara</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Antsirabe Soatanana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>RANDRIANANDRASANA Dieu Donné</td>
<td>Tobilehibe Soatanana</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Dada RAJOSOA</td>
<td>Ihosy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Jacquis</td>
<td>Tsiafahy, Antsirabe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>RAKOTONOMENJANAHARY Danielson</td>
<td>Antsirabe Avaratra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>DAVIDSON</td>
<td>Antsirabe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>MASITSARA Raymond</td>
<td>BetiokyAtsimo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
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<td>Bezaha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
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<td>Antanifotsy</td>
</tr>
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<td>RAHANTANIRINA Vastyor</td>
<td>Antanifotsy</td>
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<tr>
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<td>ANDRIANANTOANDRO Léon Fidèle</td>
<td>Ambohimiadana</td>
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<td>Anosibe, Antananarivo</td>
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<td>Yoruba Location</td>
</tr>
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<td>RANDRIANIRINA Solofoson Gilbert</td>
<td>Tsarahonenana</td>
</tr>
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<td>RANAIVOZAVA Samuel Jonah</td>
<td>Sabotsy Namehana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>RASAMIMANANA Raymond</td>
<td>Ambolonkandrina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>RANDRIANIRINA Dieu Donné</td>
<td>Fianarantsoa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>MAMPITOHO Elia</td>
<td>SALT Ivory Avaratra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>FITRANGANA Rodhls</td>
<td>SALT Ivory Avaratra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>ANDRIAMONGOLANDYTsirimampisa David</td>
<td>SALT Ivory Avaratra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>RAKOTOARIJAONA Fanomezantsoa</td>
<td>SALT Ivory Avaratra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>ANDRIANJAFY Octave Bénil</td>
<td>SALT Ivory Avaratra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>RANIVOMIARANA Raharisoa Fanjamalala</td>
<td>SALT Ivory Avaratra</td>
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<td>RAHARINOMENJAHARY Léonie Charline</td>
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STPL=Seminary Teolojikam-Paritany Loterana, Regional Lutheran Theological Seminary
STL= Seminary Teolojika Loterana, Lutheran Theological Seminary (pre-cursor to SALT)
SALT= Sekoly Ambony momba ny Teolojia, Lutheran Graduate School of Theology
MHS= Misjonshøgskole, or Missions Graduate School (Stavanger, Norway)
Yaondé= Faculté de Théologie Protestante, Protestant Faculty of Theology, Cameroon

3eme: 10th Grade in North American system
Diploma Pastoral: Pastoral Diploma (basic theological degree)
Bachelors in Theology

* did not complete project

Mpiandry: Was the preacher set apart as a shepherd in the revival movement?
This map shows the place of residence of the preachers presented in the List of Preachers.
Like a chick drinking water, she raises her head to God.\textsuperscript{1}

Preface

On September 4, 1991, I arrived in Madagascar as a first-time missionary with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. I knew almost nothing about the island and its people, having read only a \textit{National Geographic} article and seen a few pictures. A few weeks into my sojourn a relative in Norway asked me to take a picture of the statue in Antsirabe of Thorkild Rosaas, the first missionary to serve in the station which later grew to become the second largest city on the island. It turned out that Rosaas was a shirttail ancestor of mine. My roots sank deeply. Coincidentally, on September 4, 2001, I adopted my son, Heritiana, so that my family heritage has been even more deeply engrafted to Madagascar.

Four of my years in Madagascar were spent as director of the Regional Lutheran Theological Seminary at Bezaha, where I taught Church History and Homiletics. Having always been interested in scriptural texts, hermeneutical questions, exegetical issues and the methodological choices attendant on the practice of proclamation in the Christian assembly and in the daily world of the mission field, I became intrigued by what did and did not happen in the sermons I heard. I needed a fresh look at these questions as I attempted to teach preaching to more than 40 students over my four years. Some of the practices I had learned in seminary and adapted over the years seemed unsuited to the context in which I now found myself. Furthermore, I was more than impressed by the seeming ease with which my students rose to the pulpit, almost as if they had been speaking in public for years. As time wore on, I

noticed that those students with better presence and form in the pulpit were those who were also skilled in the Malagasy oratorical art known as kabary. I began to pay attention to other pastors who were also great at kabary. In both cases, I noticed little, if any, residue of kabary in their preaching and I began to wonder why. This basic question led me to explore the question of the primal theological forces in the Malagasy homiletic and the primal indigenous oratorical habits or choices inculturated into the preaching of the Malagasy Lutheran Church (Fiangonana Loterana Malagasy or FLM). I became interested in discovering to what extent the linguistic control over Malagasy memory is oral or literate and to what extent this privileging of one technology of memory over another has influenced, shaped and given energy to Malagasy theology and the practice of preaching and Christian witness in their world.

As the historic indigenous Christian movement in Madagascar, known as the Fifohazana (literally: awakening, revival), represents the fastest growing, liveliest, community-building, Christian expression, I chose to frame the discussion through the history of this unique and highly Biblically based movement in its various manifestations. Thus the study begins with a rehearsal and analysis of the origins of this movement and its key leaders – all of whom were known for their oratory.

Against the horizon of this history, I chose to examine the theories of Werner Kelber as they might inform a key hermeneutical text for the Malagasy Fifohazana: the Longer Ending of Mark's Gospel (Mark 16:9-20).

Several core observations need to be demonstrated in order to anchor my research: the oral nature of Malagasy indigenous cultures; the distinctions and their meanings between oral and literate cultures, as theorized by specialists in language and cultural form; and the
core historic forces in the Christianization of the Great Red Island (Madagascar) through preaching and teaching of the Word, through the symbols of the books of the Bible.

Having set the context for my examination and analysis of Malagasy homiletical material, I will prepare close readings of Malagasy sermons solicited from preachers all over the island. In order to provide a controlled set of materials and because of the theoretical work of Kelber around orality and literacy in the Gospel of Mark, I have chosen to collect sermons on Mark 16:1-7 (8) (pericope for Easter Day, year 1) and Mark 16:(9-13)14-20 (pericope for Ascension Day, year 1). Thus I will preface my examination of the sermons with a chapter exploring Kelber's theory of a "theology of absence" parabolized in the written expression of Mark's Gospel and compare that to a "theology of presence" injected by the Longer Ending of that same Gospel that seeks to overthrow the theology of absence in the "literate" Gospel of Mark with images of oral proclamations of the resurrection working signs and wonders in the daily world. Then, with this analysis to frame the study of the Malagasy sermons themselves, the works will be read closely to determine to what extent they reveal the identified marks of an oral theology, a literate theology, and the characteristics of the Malagasy oratorical tradition: kabary. The sermons for Ascension Day will be examined first, looking chiefly for the evidence regarding the Malagasy privileging of a theology of absence or a theology of presence with a goal of detecting to what extent the actual preaching serves to sustain an oral or literate theology in the church. The Easter sermons, with the emphasis on the empty tomb and the reaction of fear and silence, offers the second set of sermons for close reading and the goal thereof to extend the evidence gleaned toward forming an understanding of the Malagasy homiletic and its contexts.
In order to gauge the Western literate influence on Malagasy homiletical style and homiletical theologies, I will focus a target survey on Western homiletical material, looking for values of Western sources that may leave traces or have higher impact on Malagasy preaching. Primarily, as we have studied the materials thus far against the oral-literate and absence-presence binaries, I will look at the manuals with these tools as well.

Having concluded the close readings of the Malagasy material and the "imported” influence of Western homiletic manuals and examples of preaching, I will give an overview of Malagasy kabary in a chapter that is intended to compare the Malagasy materials to the internal cultural standards of oratory.

At the close of these various examinations of Malagasy sermons and their core influences, I hope to be able to form primary conclusions regarding the basic orientation, theologically and culturally, of the Malagasy theory and practice of preaching. Along the way, I hope to be able to bring to a wider audience the richness of Malagasy preaching and the church life it engenders as I have been privileged personally to witness it, and to offer the wider church a brilliant example of the internal wisdom of the indigenous cultural leaders sorting out the much theorized questions of inculturation and theological enactment through faith-filled attention to the preaching of a living Word symbolized in a sacred text.
Chapter 1: Methodological Considerations

Being a “community of the Book” may be something of an oxymoron. Can a book create and sustain community? Literacy, according to Walter Ong,2 Pattanayak,3 and others, separates individuals from the group. Though historically a group function, reading over time became a more solitary, even isolating, act. The resulting effect of reading is to remove individuals from the tribe, allowing them to think outside the accepted norms of the community, to reflect upon their life and experience as different from that of others.4 This is one of the characteristics of oral versus literate culture identified by Ong. In this chapter I wish to explore this and several other areas characteristic of oral culture and style. The aim is to provide a lens for examining kabary and the sermons of current Malagasy Lutheran preachers to see what they reveal about a Malagasy homiletic theology.

Walter Ong’s theory undergirds the theoretical framework of this study due his attention to the ontological aspect of meaning-making in orally based communities. That is, Ong’s theory goes beyond explaining cognitive aspects of orally based communication to

1 My translation.
provide a theological profile of the working of the Word in words, orally and textually exchanged. Ong, himself, has written on the differences between literate thinking and oral thinking in theological terms. The goal of this thesis is not to debate theories of cognition but rather to understand theological difference introduced by ways of being in the world that have been affected by writing and reading or the lack thereof.

The orality-literacy debate, the theory that there is a demonstrable difference between spoken language and written language which is not culture or language specific, began with those who might posit a sharp divide between the two. The debate has been attenuated by those who believe that the distinction in the cognitive functions between those who have acquired knowledge of reading and writing and those who have not is not demonstrable. Chief among these scholars are Sylvia Scribner and Michael Cole. Their research among the Vai ethnic group of Liberia, specifically focused on the those members of that society familiar with their syllabary form of writing, those who were Arabic-literate, and those who were English-literate as compared amongst themselves and with non-literates. While their research did indicate that there was a correlation between ‘schooling’ and improved cognition, they could find no correlation for literacy by itself. They write:

Our results are in direct conflict with persistent claims that “deep psychological differences” divide literate and nonliterate populations. On no task – logic, abstraction, memory, communication – did we find all nonliterate performing at lower levels than all literates.

5 See especially Ong, The Presence of the Word.
Pieter J. J. Botha critiques Scribner and Cole’s conclusions. He notes that Scribner and Cole “do not discuss nor analyze the oral culture within which these literacies function.” Botha’s own interest is akin to mine: he is not interested as much in cognitive theories undergirding educational programs (something more in line with Scribner and Cole’s interests) but rather he is looking “to understand cultural and historical difference.” These cultural and historical differences, when viewed through the lens of orality-literacy theory, reveal a significant difference in theological understanding.

I have begun with the themes of individualism and community because I believe they are specifically relevant to the Malagasy context. The Malagasy proverb that heads this chapter reflects well the absolute importance that Malagasy place on fihavanana, “relationship.” The community and one’s ties to it are of ultimate importance. The proverb translates, “It is preferable to lose profits than to lose relationships,” (my translation). How does being a “people of the Book” enhance or detract from relationship? If it is true that the tendency of society into which literacy is introduced is towards individualism, what then can be said of introducing literary modalities into an essentially oral society? To get at that question, we need to look at the characteristics of an oral culture versus literate culture.

Walter J. Ong, in *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* identifies nine characteristics of orally based thought. These characteristics are:

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9 Botha, “Cognition, Orality-Literacy, and Approaches to First-Century Writings,” 60. His emphasis.

10 Ong, *Orality and Literacy* 36-57.
1) Additive rather than subordinative style. Oral style in the relating of a story or of any material in particular tends to coordinate rather than subordinate clauses. “John went to the store and he bought a magazine,” would be an example of a coordinated sentence typical of oral style. “John went to the store in order to buy a magazine,” might be more literary. The distinction is important. The writer supplying the “in order to” in the last sentence needs to provide more contextual signals for the reader than a speaker in front of another or an audience. Readers need not be, and likely are not, in the presence of the author. Writers compose alone (though ancient amanuenses may have transcribed oral performance).

One further notes that sections of primarily oral material are frequently begun by a coordinating conjunction. Children learning to write English in grade school are usually taught to avoid beginning a sentence with “and” yet this practice is a common way of speaking when relating a story or joining sections of a speech. Here is an excerpt from a kabary – or royal speech – given by Queen Ranavalona II (1829-1883) on March 29, 1881 that demonstrates this coordinating conjunction. Note how each sentence begins with ary (and).

Ary nony tamin’ny Lehidama dia notohizany, ka nanao Andriambaventy izy, ary nandahatra ny Vahoaka ho isan-jato sy isan-arivo hilanja ny raharaha amy ny isampirenena. Ary dia nanao Miara-mila, sy nametraka Manamboninahitra amy ny sisintany izar, ho tandroky ny Tany sy ny Fanjakana, hipetrahan ny olona amin’izay ananany, ary hahato ny tenin-drainy hoe: “Ny ranomasina no valam-parihiko.”

And during the time of Lehidama (Radama I) (the conduct of government) was continued, and so he made Nobles, and he ordered the People into [groups of] hundreds and into [groups of] thousands to carry the matters to each country (subsection of the realm). And he created Soldiers, and placed Officers at the frontiers, as horns of the Land and the Government, that the people might maintain

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11 Ong, Orality and Literacy 37-38.
their belongings, and he accomplished the saying of his father, “The sea is the limit of my rice fields.”

Ary joins the queen’s thoughts in a way that adds to the flow of a speech but which would become tiresome in a literary work. Moreover, the coordinating conjunction allows for the internal parts of the speech to be mutually contextualizing. Making nobles and ordering the masses are both a part of Radama’s conduct of government. We might better translate the above, leaving out the first “and:” “During the time of Lehidama the conduct of the government was continued when he made Nobles, ordering the People into [groups of] hundreds and into [groups of] thousands…”

In oral style, the coordinative joining of sentences means that each one is equally important and each one is contextualized by all the others. In contrast, in literate style a partial decontextualization is achieved by backgrounding some sentences with subordinating conjunctions so that a main sentence is partially isolated.

Richard Horsley demonstrates how this additive style in the oral-derived narrative of the Gospel of Mark functions to add meaning by holding juxtaposed stories in tension. Oral narrative does not refute one narrative portrayal of Jesus with another. Additive and aggregative oral narrative rather adds further episodes to those already narrated in both-and presentation. Jesus performed healings and exorcisms and also confronted the rulers and their representatives and then also was arrested and tried and killed by them. Oral-aural “logic” (perhaps an oxymoron) is both-and.

This leads us to Ong’s next characteristic of orally-based thought and style.

2) Aggregative rather than analytic.

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A modern, North American homiletician like David Buttrick,\textsuperscript{17} whose work holds considerable sway in the academic arena of homiletical practice since its publication, (1987) would have a hard time maintaining an oral style for a primarily oral audience. Buttrick’s theories suggest that excess and standard phrases should be removed from sermons.\textsuperscript{18}

Buttrick’s theory of preaching is designed for a more literate mindset. Buttrick documents that the literate mind finds repetitions of epithets, clichés and proverbial material wearisome. However, in contrast, oral thought, having no recourse to writing for maintaining records, needs mnemonic devices to hold material together and stabilize it for retention and transmission. A literary, analytic approach separates out the pieces from the whole and pares down the rhetoric to its essentials. The oral preferences are displayed in Malagasy formal discourse, and not uncommon in informal discourse, Malagasy will resort to a copious use of proverbs and common expressions. Malagasy typically, for example, give a formal greeting quoting the proverb, “Raha misaraka tsy mifanao veloma, hono, naman’ny tezitra. Raha mifankahita tsy mifampiarahaba, naman’ny tsy faly.” (If [people] part without saying good-bye, so the saying goes, it is as if they were angry. If [people] see each other without exchanging greetings, then it is as if they are not happy. My translation). Or, when something has slipped the mind of a Malagasy speaker and she wishes to return to the point, she might say, “Mihinam-bary tsy maintsy misy latsaka,” (When eating rice, some must fall). Often it is the preponderance of proverbs artfully cited that will win the argument.


\textsuperscript{18} Buttrick, \textit{Homiletic} 189.
Ong also identifies epithets from Homer and other sources as common expressions of the aggregative effect.  

3) Redundancy or copiousness.

*Copia* was a rhetorical virtue identified by ancient rhetoricians. A written form of communication remains for the eye to re-scan if the reader has missed a point or has forgotten an important piece of what has been said. Because sound is always an event, passing out of existence the moment it is heard, as Ong likes to note, one communicating in the oral medium must provide redundancy in order to assure that his or her listeners have grasped the message. The demands of oral presentation also require that one speaking before a large group, especially without the aid of current amplification technologies, find means to assure that listeners have ample opportunities to grasp the meaning and direction of the message. According to Ong, citing Chafe, writing slows down the natural thinking process which oral communication inhabits and, because it is mechanically slower as well, allows for, even prefers, economy in vocabulary. *Copia* allows a grace period to the speaker that he or she may use to bring to mind the next point to be addressed. A writer can simply put down the pen or stop typing. My own suspicion is that redundancy allows the mind of the listener a break as well. The level of concentration need not be as high in following the meaning and sense of what the speaker is trying to communicate. If you lose the sense on the

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19 Ong, *Orality and Literacy* 39.

20 Ong, *Orality and Literacy* 39–41.

21 Ong, *Orality and Literacy* 39.

first utterance not simply because of bad acoustics but because of tiredness or lack of concentration, it can be picked up again because of redundancy.

Malagasy oratory is resplendent with copia. The following excerpt from a kabary not only illustrates copia but also provides an excellent example of the aggregative style mentioned above. This is a portion of what is known as the ala tisiny (removal of blame) in a typical speech. The metaphors are as fixed as the epithets are in Homer.

*Indreo eo koa ireo ZOKIBE toa ray, vato nasondrotry ny tany, trafo nasondrotry ny nofo, zavona ningain’ny rano. Zoky tsy salovani-miteny, tsy ialohava-mandeha ary loharano tsy dikain’ny zinga.*

There, too, are those Senior Elders like a father, stone raised up by the ground, the fatted hump of a steer raised up by the flesh, fog lifted by the water. An elder is not to be interfered with in speech, not to be gone before and a water source not crossed by a dipper.23

As we shall see in Chapter 4, redundancy is a key factor in Malagasy preaching.

4) **Conservative or traditionalist.**24

Innovation threatens the stability of information in an oral culture. To be retained, information in an oral culture must be repeated over and over again, both to stabilize it the memory of the elders and to inculcate it in the minds of the young.

*Ny lambo soso-nify, ny goaika fotsy tenda, ny akoho bangaridana, ny gidro kely petaka orana aza, tom磅ko, tsy mba manova ny netin-drazana, maika ve fa isika olombelana.*

“The wild boar with over-lapping teeth, the magpie with a white throat, the chicken with no teeth, even the little gidro lemur with a flat nose, ladies and gentleman, yet they do not change ancestral custom; how much more so we human beings.”25


24 Ong, *Orality and Literacy* 41-42.
The effort required to maintain the storehouse of an oral culture’s wisdom is immense and cannot endure spontaneous innovation. Writing, by contrast, frees the mind “to think outside the box” as the current expression has it. Because data inscribed for retrieval at a later date frees the mind’s energies for other tasks, innovation can and may even necessarily follow.

Eric Havelock demonstrates in his work, Preface to Plato,26 how Plato sensed the shift in the way that one processes thought as writing was becoming more and more established in Greek culture.27 Plato wanted his republic to be led by philosopher-kings whose education would be specifically devoid of poetry.28 The basic rationale for this change in curriculum was to free the mind from the burdens of memorization and to free it for reflective thought.

25 Herinantsoina Ranaivo Raholdina, Ny Fikabariako: Ny Kabary Malagasy Ankehitriny, Fianarana Mikabary, vol. 2 & 3, 3 vols. (Ankorondrano, Antananarivo: SME, 2001) 134. I have chosen in my translations to be more literal than following a dynamic equivalency model. This, I hope, will allow the reader a better sense of the underlying patterns of thought.


27 For a strong rebuttal of Havelock’s theses see: John Halverson, “Havelock on Greek Orality and Literacy,” Journal of the History of Ideas, 53 (1) (1992), 148-163. Halverson argues that Havelock places too much importance on the development of the Greek alphabet, thus becoming reductionist in the light of other cultural developments of the time. He finds his arguments therefore unconvincing. While Havelock may attribute too much to the development of literacy, his arguments are not to be dismissed so lightly. Literacy clearly does have impact. Other scholars have a more appreciative and nuanced critique of Havelock’s approach that resists the “Great Divide” theory but affirms the basic tenants. Ekaterina Haskins argues that Havelock overdraws his conclusions. She avers that metrical constraints do not limit description nor does a purely oral state limit reflection. Furthermore, the level of indentification with the characters of the epic is not as intense as Havelock suggests. She sees that metrical constraints do not limit description nor does a purely oral state limit reflection. Furthermore, the level of indentification with the characters of the epic is not as intense as Havelock suggests.

28 Havelock, Preface to Plato 3-15.
Using poetry, especially the mastering of the Greek canon of Homer and Hesiod, was the lynchpin in maintaining cultural knowledge in primarily oral Greece. Homer’s epics were not only good entertainment but they provided the storage medium for much that was important in the culture from the exemplary moral virtues of the heroes to equipment necessary to outfit a ship.\textsuperscript{29} The study of the canon was not arduous indeed it was truly enjoyable. Children and adults could listen to the tales told in rhythmic hexameter; the formulas of which were commonplace and stable. Indeed, it is the formulas that make the system work. Whole poems were not memorized, as we understand memorization. Modern memorization involves a verbatim repetition of an inscribed record. Where no such record exists, there is no realistic way of determining the accuracy of the recitation – especially long recitations. Rather material is thematically stored in smaller formulaic units. “In…non-literate cultures the task of education could be described as putting the whole community into a formulaic state of mind.”\textsuperscript{30} Both the content of oral thought and the mechanism for retaining the content are therefore naturally conserving.

This does not mean, however, that innovation is not possible in an oral culture. Just the opposite is true. Innovation is achieved by a re-ordering or re-configuration of the formulas and content, a shift in emphasis, that moves the community into new areas while all the time appearing to maintain a traditional base.

\textit{Raha hiteny ireo razantsika fahiny, dia miala tsiny, raha hivolana izy dia miala fondro, ary raha handahatra dia miala salohy fito.}

\textsuperscript{29} Havelock, \textit{Preface to Plato} 83.
\textsuperscript{30} Havelock, \textit{Preface to Plato} 140.
When those ancient ancestors of ours were to speak, they would excuse themselves, if he would speak, then he would beg not to be censured, and if he made a speech he would pay [as a fine] seven sheaves.\textsuperscript{31}

Innovation, therefore, is “conserved” within the tradition rather than being seen as opposing it.\textsuperscript{32} By the same token, meaning in an oral context is not fixed in vocabulary, as it would be in a written work. As speech is an event and the meaning is derived from the event, the shifting context will allow the meaning to change over time. Fixed written communication may eventually require a dictionary to aid the reader in comprehending the message. So while oral culture is traditionalist and conserving, it is not static.

Haring, speaking of kabary, makes the same point about change in a traditionalist setting.

The orators quote proverbial comparisons, ohabolana, and hainteny. They may also create or insert new sentences modeled on the familiar patterns. … They use existing verses as models for the creation of new ones, in the familiar tetrameter pattern. They cast their new verses into the patterns of the proverb – symmetrical, doubled-symmetrical, order-of-climax, or topic-comment. In addition to quoting, they imitate proverbs and poems, half-quoting them allusively, developing or shortening them, surrounding them with different metered phrases so that their parallelisms will stand out. \textit{Thus the performers create, in each performance, a new text that sounds old}. Though their tireless quoting of fixed phrases can be seen as a form of rhetorical misdirection to take advantage of one’s opponent (Bloch 1971), the quotations reassure the audience that “we have changed nothing in the customs of the ancestors.”\textsuperscript{33}

Change is therefore accomplished precisely by appealing to tradition.

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\item \textsuperscript{32} Ong \textit{Orality and Literacy} 42.
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5) *Close to experienced reality.*

Seemingly, the earliest uses for writing were as inventories and lists of merchandise. Writing assured good business as maintaining accurate records for sale in memory was all but impossible when cargoes and inventories became large. For an oral culture, abstracted lists are not memorable; stories are. For material to be maintained action and correspondence with lived reality must be present. Metaphors drawn from the known world will more broadly communicate than abstract concepts. Interestingly, in his manual on preaching, Buttrick picks up on this oral mindset and instructs his readers to avoid abstractions in their preaching. He says, “Any human being’s vocabulary is apt to be a language of things and actions that can be seen. Therefore, as we have mentioned, we will steer clear of conceptual words.”

6) *Agonistically toned.*

Communication in an oral culture naturally takes place in a more agonistically toned environment. The actions are large and dramatic; the story is told more in terms of conflict than in terms of introspection. Even the tone of voice used would be dramatic rather than restrained or calm. Logic would draw us to this conclusion if experience had not already provided the data. Given the use of the life world of the speaker and hearer, the emphasis upon story and action, it seems normal to expect that an orally based communication would play out in a more dramatic register than literate culture tolerates. Literate culture, which encourages private reflection and withdrawal from community to process communication,

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34 Ong, *Orality and Literacy* 42-43.
36 Ong, *Orality and Literacy* 43-45.
prefers the quieter realms of thought. Abstractions rarely come to life and fill the world with their antics as anthropomorphized animals and spirits might. Over time, agonistic performance has become looked down upon by more literate society. It is often thought of in pejorative terms. In politics, it is associated with demagoguery and in religious life with the preaching of people with less education. Yet residually oral cultures, cultures that still show much of the oral mindset in their written communication, can still produce agonistically toned literature. One can look at the writings of Martin Luther, for example. Although a prolific writer and highly “literate,” Luther maintained a strong oral style in his writings. The blasts at the pope in his books could come with extreme vehemence and then, paradoxically, he could write directly to the Holy See with great deference and humility. For example, Luther preaches against the Pope and the Pope’s doctrine saying:

That is our Christian faith. We refuse to learn the way to heaven from the pope and thus risk our necks, for he does not know the Father. We want no part of his faith; for the Turkish, Jewish, and papist beliefs are essentially identical. No, you must say: “First of all, teach me to know Christ; lead me to that Man. If He says it, if it is His Word, if it comes from His lips, I will accept it. Then I will kiss your feet, and I will show you even greater honor. But if you want to hide Him from me, I will not listen to you; yes, I will even have you trampled down. If you want to preach nothing to me but your own prattle, I will not only refuse to kiss your hands and feet, but I will even smear your mouth with filth.” Your life and doctrine must be based and founded on Christ’s Word and doctrine. It must proceed from His mouth and His Word.

And then Luther is able to write an irenic letter addressing the Pope thus:

“AN OPEN LETTER TO POPE LEO X

To Leo X, Pope at Rome, Martin Luther wishes salvation in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.


Living among the monsters of this age with whom I am now for the third year waging war, I am compelled occasionally to look up to you, Leo, most blessed father, and to think of you. Indeed, since you are occasionally regarded as the sole cause of my warfare, I cannot help thinking of you. To be sure, the undeserved raging of your godless flatterers against me has compelled me to appeal from your see to a future council, despite the decrees of your predecessors Pius and Julius, who with a foolish tyranny forbade such an appeal. Nevertheless, I have never alienated myself from Your Blessedness to such an extent that I should not with all my heart wish you and your see every blessing, for which I have besought God with earnest prayers to the best of my ability.\[39\]

This double-mindedness may be hard to explain outside of the oral/literate paradigm.

Within the paradigm, the struggle is less personal and more communal for orally based people. Struggle is the normal condition of humanity, so communication in its most natural medium, sound, should reflect the dynamics of struggle.

But violence in oral art forms is also connected with the structure of orality itself. When all verbal communication must be by direct word of mouth, involved in the give-and-take dynamics of sound, interpersonal relations are kept high – both attractions and, even more, antagonisms.\[40\]

In the economy of oral communication, the polarities of good and evil, hero and villain, vice and virtue, starker contrasts have to be drawn. Shades of grey are not helpful in maintaining the attention of the listener.\[41\]

7) Empathetic and participatory rather than objectively distanced.\[42\]

We begin now to come back to the concept of fihavanana that was alluded to at the start of this chapter. Oral thinkers identify with what they wish to communicate in a deeper

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39 Martin Luther, “Why the Books of the Pope and his Disciples were Burned, 1520,” Luther’s Works: Career of the Reformer I, eds. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, et al., vol. 31 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1957) 384. While both these quotations are at some distance in time from each other, they reflect oral sensibilities. For a fascinating Malagasy equivalent of oral style being maintained in letters of Zafimaniry elders dictating to scribes, see: Maurice E. F. Bloch, How We Think They Think: Anthropological Approaches to Cognition, Memory and Literacy, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), 111-112.

40 Ong, Orality and Literacy 45.

41 This may be one reason why good ethical sermons are difficult to produce.

42 Ong, Orality and Literacy 45-46.
way than literate thinkers. Writing, by its nature, distantiates the knower from the known. The literate mind seeks to separate out that which is under consideration and examine it; it seeks to objectify. Robert Dubois makes essentially the same point without reference to orality and literacy. He describes two types of thinkers: *l’homme de la ratiocination* (rational man) and *l’homme de la participation* (participatory man). Dubois is reflecting on the *fady* (sprinkling) ritual for removing consanguination taboos among the people of the Bas Faroany in eastern Madagascar. Citing J. Goetz, he notes that these modes of thought, “rational” and “participatory,” are naturally found in all people to some extent but in inverse proportions. Dubois writes:

*Le ratiocineur poursuit des idées claires et distinctes, et la distinction entraîne pour lui la séparation; l’homme de la participation distingue sans séparer: dans le tout il saisit les parties. Pour s’expliquer les hommes et les choses de la nature, le premier abstrait; pour comprendre, le second les intègre. Par un effet inverse, l’assentiment intellectuel est rendu plus difficile chez le premier, lorsqu’il y a complexité – chez le second, lorsqu’il y a abstraction. Le premier est plus apte à saisir le mécanisme des choses, le second leur sens. Le premier entend domestiquer le monde; le second, s’y incorporer. Le premier se fera le maître de la nature, le second vivra la mystique de l’univers.*

The rational thinker follows distinct and clear ideas, and the distinction means separation for him; the participatory thinker distinguishes without separating; in the whole he perceives the parts. To explain humanity and natural things, the first abstracts; to comprehend, the second integrates them. By an inverse effect, intellectual assent is rendered more difficult among the first when there is complexity – among the second, when there is abstraction. The first is more apt to seize the mechanism of things, the second their sense. The first means to domesticate the world; the second, to incorporate himself/herself in it. The first would make

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45 Dubois, *Olombelona* 62.
himself/herself master of nature; the second would live in the mystery of the universe.46

Oral thought is more communal in nature. Oral thought subjectifies. Basically, knowledge is not then independent of the community. The performer of an oral work both relies upon and creates the common memory that makes his or her communication effective. The performer, enmeshed in the world of the material he or she is presenting, creates in and through the performance the conditions of memory and experience that make the experience common for his/her listeners.47 The performance and the material are totally engaged.

8) Homeostatic.48

Oral societies live in the present; their memories are conditioned by the needs of the moment. As the community no longer needs or requires certain information, that information is either lost or re-coded to fit a new reality. Ong notes this specifically in the area of vocabulary, where, as was said above, words either disappear from a language or are transmuted to new meanings. Dictionaries in literate culture show clearly the layers of meaning words can have as the contexts change over time. Stories change, too, to meet the demands of the current milieu.

A particularly interesting example of such change may be found in the Malagasy word “to read” – mamaky. The root of the word, vaky, seems originally to have meant, “to

46 Dubois, Olombelona 62. My translation.
47 Havelock, Preface to Plato 145-46.
48 Ong, Orality and Literacy 46-49.
This is consistent with the mechanics of what one might have been doing when the first examples at writing in Madagascar were made. It has been shown that reading was originally introduced by the Arabs trading on the northwest and eastern coasts of the island and was especially established among the Antemoro. If the Arabic script were essentially used for Islamic ritual and worship, it would have been chanted, the text serving as an aide-mémoire. Later generations have a different sense of the derivation of the word. This derivation is built on a homonym of the word with same root, vaky, “to chop” as in wood. A famaky is an axe. The Rev. Rakotomaro Jean Baptiste, in an interview, told me that the derivation of the word was quite simple. He picked up a book, noting how it looked like a

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49 Razafintsalama, La Langue Malgache et les Origines Malgaches: Le Fond Initial du Vocabulaire Malgache (Étude de Vocabulaire) (Tananarive: Imprimerie Moderne de L’Emyrene, G. Pitot & Cie., 1928) 53. The author places the Malagasy root vaky (teny), action de lire, (act of reading) in comparison to the Sanscrit: “vaka, récitation de formule dans certaines cérémonies, recueil d’hymnes,” (vaka, recitation of formulas in certain ceremonies, collection of hymns). Then in a note he says, “Ce mot est le pendant de dika (=lika sanscrit, Voir ce mot) écriture, transcription, et de soratra (=surat malais, écrire). Mais il devait être confondu fatalement avec vaky (=baga …) action de casser, de briser, de découper: seule leurs significations sont restées tout à fait distinctes. Les deux mots lika et vaka (Voir Dict. etym.) prouvent donc absolument que les Malgaches ont connu l’écriture dès le but [sic] de leur histoire.” (This word is the counterpart of dika [=lika, Sanskrit, See this word] writing, transcription, and of soratra [=surat, Malay, to write]. But it was bound to be confused fatally with vaky [=baga, …] to break, to shatter, to cut: only their meanings have remained totally distinct. The two words lika and vaka [See etymological dictionary] thus prove absolutely that the Malagasy knew writing from the beginning [début] of their history.” My translation.) Razafintsalama’s last point may add a different perspective to the debate. However, if the original meaning had more to do with chanting or hymnody, then it would make more sense that it was applied to reading as the act of reading would have seemed more like singing to an observer.


51 The noun indicating a tool for the action involved is formed from the present tense of the active mood, substituting an “f” for the initial “m.” This is true of other verbs as well. A television, for example, is a fahita-lavitra from mahita lavitra meaning “to see a long distance.”

52 The Rev. Rakotomaro Jean Baptiste, personal conversation, Antananarivo, November 4, 2002. Pastor Rakotomaro was the General Secretary of the Malagasy Lutheran Church at the time.
log, and using his hand as an axe, chopped the book open to reveal its contents. Rajemisa-Raolison, the premier lexicographer of modern Malagasy, defines the word this way:

**Mamaky** (vaky) mt.p. ... Manasaratsaraka ny teny voasoratra mba hahazoana ny hevitra ao anatiny.

To well separate written words thereby to better understand what is in them.53 He, too, has accepted the more conflated sense of the two words.

9) **Situational rather than abstract.**54

Oral thought draws its categories from lived experience. Thought is not abstracted out and separated from what is known rather it is related to what is best known. Ong cites the research of A. R. Luria.55 Luria showed how non-literate and semi-literate people in Uzbekistan and Kirghizia in 1931-1932 thought not in abstract categories but in categories drawn from their experience. Ong cites the experiment whereby non-literate folk were asked to determine which item in a list did not fit the category. The list consisted of a hammer, log, saw and hatchet. The non-literate did not categorize according to the abstract concept “tools” but rather to the situation of what might be needed to effect change in the log.56 This does not mean, however, that non-literate people are unable to think hypothetically. Sylvia Scribner has demonstrated that when traditional, non-literate people are given verbal problems to solve that fit their experience, they were able to make coherent, logical explanations for their line of thought. “These observations make it clear that inferences

54 Ong, *Orality and Literacy* 49-57.
about a generalized incapacity of traditional people to reason logically are unwarranted,” she writes.57

In the education of an adult towards problem solving, an oral culture deals directly with the object under consideration. The community will work together to solve the problem.58 Memory, corporate and individual, holds the key to how the solutions are passed down. In a literate culture, writing may mediate the solution. To state the obvious, there are no “how-to” books in an oral culture. Learning, therefore, must be by participatory experience. In a literate culture, learning can be decontextualized.59

In the area of public oratory, Malagasy children are schooled from a very early age. They listen to the *angano*60 (fairy tales) told by their grandparents; they play the word games *ankamantatra*61 and *ankafidy*62 (riddles) with their parents and with each other; they attend family and community functions in which formal orations are a normal part.63 Learning is highly contextual and rooted in the community. The word games in particular teach children


58 This certainly is the model that Christian catechesis originally understood. See κατηχεύω, in Liddell and Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon*, 7th ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975). “To teach by word of mouth, to instruct.” It is an oral exercise where the teacher and learner repeat question and answers.


61 *Ankamantatra* are riddles that take the form of a question: *Inona áry izany: Hanitry ny ala? Sakamalao.* (What then is this: Perfume of the forest? Ginger). *Inona áry izany: Izy entiko, ary izaho vatsiny? Hao.* (What then is this: I carry him and I am his provisions? Lice.) Dahle, *Anganony Ntaolo* 261.


what the cognitive associations are. Haring points out that Malagasy riddles are particularly binary in their form. They form the basis for a two-sided exchange that is later echoed in *hainteny* and *kabary*. Haring explains,

Riddling is especially practiced by children. The published literature shows its important developmental function. It directs their attention to mastering the speech code, with all the double meanings and wittiness it contains. Perhaps it is the special task of Malagasy folklore to convey messages about the Malagasy language. In addition to this metalinguistic task, riddling has a poetic function: it directs the attention of children to a certain message form comprising of precedent and sequent. … Like other games, riddling in Madagascar constitutes a small-scale folk model for a dialogic pattern that pervades much other verbal art.

While there are formal schools for orators in Madagascar today, and a number of books on *kabary* oration, the true academy for oratory is the apprenticeship model detailed above.

Context is determinant. Øyvind Dahl has studied the problems of intercultural communication with specific reference to Madagascar where he both grew up as a child of Norwegian missionaries and served himself as a missionary. Citing Hall’s classifications, Dahl asserts that Malagasy culture is a high-context environment for communication. One must be aware of the meaning inherent not only in the words or symbols used but also to the physical surroundings, the manner of the discourse, the timing of the speech, etc., in order to properly decode the message. “What is expressed in words (text) is not necessarily the essence of what is expressed through the context.”

64 Haring, *Verbal Arts in Madagascar* 29.
65 Haring, *Verbal Arts in Madagascar* 35.
For Western, literate culture, words have meaning and while not all are taken at face value, westerners tend not to look as deeply at the context to decode a message. Indeed, if the medium is literature, it is by nature decontextualized. The book’s pages are decoded by reading. Rarely is the book itself the message, though we would be mistaken to think that the fact that the communication is a book does not color the meaning. Dahl demonstrates through various cultural frames how it is that two cultures can misunderstand each other even when the words themselves are clearly defined. One of the frames explored is that of fihavanana. An example from my own time in Madagascar may help to explain. On two occasions I was visited by people asking for help with a sensitive matter. The first was a pastor and, as it later turned out, father of a student who had been admitted to, but had not yet registered at, the seminary I was directing in southern Madagascar. The pastor presented with a complaint about the tuition that students would have to pay beginning that academic year. In the past, all students received a bursary and there were no fees. This had been true during the pastor’s own studies. Malagasy do not very often use patronyms, and so I had no way of knowing that the pastor was related to any of the incoming students. I explained as clearly as I could that the tuition was the responsibility of the synod (local church judicatory) and not the responsibility of the student. The pastor was never satisfied with my responses and continued to complain about the tuition that he was sure the students would have to pay. As it happened, an older, retired missionary was sitting in the room and, exasperated, he told the pastor to go home, that I had answered his concern. When the young man later turned up at the school, I learned of his relationship to the pastor and I discovered that he did not meet the requisite educational standard. By returning repeatedly to a settled matter the pastor had been signaling to me his concern. I was supposed to pick up on the signal and ask what the
other problem was. Someone more familiar with the context would have picked up on the pastor’s communication device that signaled a desire to discuss a more sensitive issue.

Similarly, a young woman was in a compromising relationship with a church official that had promised her an opportunity to study abroad. The relationship had dragged on for some time without any movement on a foreign scholarship so she came to see me. In hindsight, all the clues were present in her discourse. She continued to stress the need for a scholarship despite my clear explanation that she had to follow established procedures. This time I sensed I had missed something. An hour after she left, I called her back to visit me again. I asked her if what we were discussing was something we could not openly discuss because it was too shameful. She indicated it was and so, without actually discussing the compromised state she was in, we worked out a solution.

Indirection is a common characteristic of Malagasy communication. It works only to the extent that the speakers share a common context. One never tells the family of the deceased, for example, that their loved one has died. This would be considered too direct. One says simply, “she is very ill.” The family picks up on the message easily and usually without false hope.69

The rich web of meaning derived from context allows for repartee to be highly nuanced. As noted above, riddling games teach children the thrust and parry of good dialogue. Words, interacting within a context, are never without layers of meaning. This Foley explores in his work, The Singer of Tales in Performance. Foley summarizes the main thesis of his work in a pithy statement akin to proverb, “word-power derives from the

69 See also: William A. Foley, Anthropological Linguistics (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997) 278-80. Foley specifically discusses Malagasy indirection. Foley notes that even a small amount of private knowledge in a small community confers power on the one holding it hence a natural inclination to avoid too much disclosure (278).
enabling event of performance and the enabling referent of tradition.” To unpack this phrase we should first give a brief history of the theory of oral composition originally set forth by Milman Parry (1902-1935) and Albert Lord (1912-1991) and followed upon by many of the scholars already mentioned.

Milman Parry set out to explore some of the internal inconsistencies in the Homeric corpus that plagued scholars for some time. For one, certain epithets seemed not to be as apt in a given context as others might have been but were suited more to the metrical demands of hexameter than to any actual meaning. Parry, with his student, Albert Lord, studied then contemporary South Slavic oral poets, guslar, who could neither read nor write to see how they composed their works. What he discovered was that no two epic poems, sung as Homer’s works were, as performed even by the same guslar were entirely the same. Instead they were thematically similar, used a plethora of stock images and epithets already coded to the necessary hexameter and were stitched together to fit the performance context. “Parry’s discovery,” Ong notes, “might be put this way: virtually every distinctive feature of Homeric poetry is due to the economy enforced on it by oral methods of composition.” The works we now have as Homer’s Odyssey and Iliad are not pristinely preserved verbata of Homer’s original work. This would have necessitated not only incredible feats of memory that, though not unheard of, would also require some external record or canon by which to measure it.

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73 Ong, Orality and Literacy 21.

74 Ong, Orality and Literacy 21.
Instead the works are a one-time transcript of an oral performance, or, in a more refined version of the theory, a composite of transcripts of performances. Thus there is no original text, only reports of performance. Homer may have indeed composed some original epic whose structure and meter was then copied, expanded upon and edited by succeeding generations of poets. We have therefore, only one version.

One corollary to Parry and Lord’s Oral Composition Theory is that the constraints on the composition place constraints on how the medium can be used to express thought, communicate ideas, store information and reflect upon it. Without chirographic or print recourse, the community must expend a fair amount of its energy on maintaining information in common memory as noted above. Rhythmic expression, as in the Homeric hexameter, reduces the available vocabulary to those words that fit the pattern rather than that which conforms best to the idea to be expressed. In some respects, therefore, the oral medium is limited.

Havelock, as noted, picks up on this. Looking at Plato’s *Republic*, Havelock demonstrates that the work takes on a more coherent perspective if one understands it as an attack on the existing educational structure of the time. As the Homeric corpus was the primary curriculum of Greek life and could only be apprehendedaurally, a huge amount of effort was devoted to mastering the poems. They were not so much taught in schools as learned by participation in the rituals and recitations of daily life. Their stock phrases, images and story lines were engrained upon the memory by constant exposure and repetition. Although not memorized in the verbatim fashion to which we are accustomed today, the only

way to maintain the corporate memory was by mastering the corpus. According to Havelock, Plato’s program for educational reform was to remove the poet from the pedagogical mix. He is entering the lists against centuries of habituation in rhythmic memorised experience. He asks of men that instead they should think about what they say, instead of just saying it. And they should separate themselves from it instead of identifying with it; they themselves should become the ‘subject’ who stand apart from the ‘object’ and reconsiders it and analyses it and evaluates it, instead of just ‘imitating’ it.76

If, as Havelock describes, it is true that writing and the education based upon a more literate foundation frees the mind to reflect critically on matters under consideration, there is also a concomitant loss. What was known implicitly by the community, held in common memory and served as the foundation for communication must now be re-established or defined overtly for a reader or even for another interlocutor not steeped in the same community’s ethos.

Returning to Foley’s statement, “word-power derives from the enabling event of performance and the enabling referent of tradition,” the picture becomes a bit clearer. Meaning, Foley asserts, is derived from the context of the speech event and the tradition in which that event stands. In The Singer of Tales in Performance, Foley brings three streams of research on oral art into a synthesis. The Ethnography of Speaking school notes that something more than the literal meaning of words is being communicated in the performance event that keys the listener to unlock the real meaning being shared. This is joined to the Ethnopoetic approach that focuses on the inherent rhetorical structures and the dynamics of performance. Finally, Foley adds the Oral-Formulaic Theory of Parry and Lord, focusing, as noted above, on the inferred traditions. Foley speaks here of a metonymic reference whereby

76 Havelock, Preface to Plato 47.
the individual parts of the discourse call to mind whole traditions and landscapes of meaning. He describes this performance tradition as ‘immanent art’ that he defines as, “the set of metonymic associative meanings institutionally delivered and received through a dedicated idiom or register either during or on the authority of traditional oral performance.”

To get at ‘word-power’ Foley sets up three lenses for examining the oral or residually oral material. Register, he defines with Dell Hymes as the styles of speech consonant in recurrent settings and adding from the Ethnopoetic School the fact that these speech styles include non-verbal communications, which are difficult or impossible to record in written form. We will note, in chapters to follow, that there are similarities and differences in the registers of kabary and sermons. Those registers may give us keys to a deeper understanding of the theological, philosophical and cultural underpinnings of the respective genre.

Metonymic reference grants to the performed work – or the recorded work – a communicative economy. Because meaning is encoded deeply in the cultural references, the speaker/composer can draw on a wide range of vocabulary and gesture that will communicate far more than the simple words he or she might use.

Finally, the performance arena, the location of the actual performance, whether physically or metaphorically, offers meaning to the verbal transaction. Malagasy speak of kabary and resaka, of “oratory” and “ordinary conversation.” One knows that certain vocabulary, tone of voice and gestures belong to the kabary performed at a wedding

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77 Foley, *The Singer of Tales in Performance* 208-09.


negotiation or for hira gasy (folk festival with music and kabary speeches). The former is
done in the home of the bride and the latter in an open field, while conversation can happen
in the chance meeting on the street. Sermons in pulpits may draw one in but a sermon
launched into in the corner booth of a restaurant will likely be received very differently.
Location affects meaning.

At the beginning of this chapter, I asked if a book can create community and then
proceeded to explicate how alienation is introduced to a primarily oral culture as the
technologies of writing and print are introduced. The categories, however, are not
monolithic. Rather there exists in even the most literate of societies a way of knowing and
thinking that remains structured by oral modalities. We all know proverbs, for example, with
which we pepper our speech and our written communication. Literate forms still hold to oral
patterns where register, communicative economy and the performance arena will help us
decode their meaning as we sit listening with an inner ear. The book can still create
community. Given that, the people of the book will not be bankrupt of fihavanana.

As we proceed in the following chapters, we will use the foregoing insights to
examine the mindset and self-understanding of western missionaries whose “literate”
categories may have blinded them to the very rich and nuanced oratorical skill of their
Malagasy converts, leading them to a homiletic that speaks with unclear referents
decontextualized not only from the Malagasy culture but even, in many ways from their own.
We will see how Malagasy kabary and some of the other attendant oral art (hainteny,
ohabolana, etc.) are well explicated with reference to the culture when its ‘word-power’ is
fully explored and we will see how current Lutheran clergy negotiate between these two
worlds.
Chapter 2: The Conquest by the Spoken Word

One of the most distinct features of Malagasy Christianity is the *Fifohazana*, the “Awakening.” In English, the movement is often referred to as a “revival” but the word in Malagasy literally translates as “awakening” and is, in my opinion, best expressed by that word. Revival assumes a lethargy in continuity with some longer Christian past and might be acceptable in countries with long Christian traditions. For the Malagasy, the issue is not solely a re-vivification of an existing though lethargic church, it is the planting of a new church through primary evangelism.

The *Fifohazana* represents a Malagasization of Christianity in some rather striking ways. The power of the Word, especially the spoken Word, and its manifestations in signs and wonders play an important part in the movement’s theology. This power, and its relation to spoken-ness, demonstrates a particularly Malagasy understanding. To set the stage, we need to share a brief history of the movement and its place within the larger history of Christianity in Madagascar. We start with that larger history.

Christianity was first brought to Madagascar by French Roman Catholic missionaries in 1642. They founded a mission station in what is today Tolagnaro, naming it Fort Dauphin, after the infant Louis XIV, but the population was not receptive and as things became hostile; the station was abandoned. No truly successful mission work was done again until August

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11th, 1818 when Thomas Bevans and David Jones arrived in Toamasina. These gentleman were from the London Missionary Society and represented, in part, the British government’s attempt to contain French expansion in the region and begin to end the slave trade by solidifying the reign of the young king Radama I (d.1828). Radama’s father, Andrianampioimerina (d.1810), had successfully unified the tribes around his capital of Ambohimanga (and later Antananarivo) in part because he assured a frightened populace that they would enjoy protection from marauding warlords who were looking to sell slaves to the lucrative market between Madagascar and Ile de Bourbon (Reunion) where the French were heavily invested in sugar plantations. While Andrianampoinimerina did not end the slave trade, indeed he profited mightily by it, he did manage to grant security to the ethnically similar groupings which he had united under him. Feeling the highs of his success, Andrianampoinimerina declared, “The sea is the limit of my rice fields.” He clearly saw himself as the island’s natural ruler. Time and lack of resources prevented him accomplishing more than securing the area around Antananarivo known as Imerina.

Radama, however, was a Europhile and the British were making inquiries for alliances. In exchange for ending the slave trade, Radama would receive from the British guns and other technologies that he could use to expand his empire. Part and parcel with the geographic expansion was a need to expand the administrative bureaucracy that would assure his continued control of the lands subjugated. Missionaries were therefore sent in to codify the language and begin to teach reading and writing. Malaria took Thomas Bevans and his

3 Brown, *Madagascar Rediscovered* 129.
family and the wife and child of David Jones but after the one false start, the enterprise got underway in earnest again in 1820.4

As has been noted elsewhere, Malagasy had already been committed to writing using Arabic script sometime after Arab traders began visiting the east of Madagascar in the 12th century.5 The secrets of decoding written Malagasy in Arabic script (sorabe) were held by the Antemoro diviners. The numbers of adepts in reading and writing this script was kept by custom to around twenty in any generation.6 Use of these diviners meant that Radama was dependent upon them for transmitting and decoding messages. Politically, this was a problem. The new missionaries spent some time trying to decide if the Arabic script would make the most sense for their new context. Radama settled the matter by proclaiming Latin script as the form the written language would take on March 26, 1823.7 Munthe indicates that Radama took his decision based upon the advice of one of the young Malagasy students of the LMS missionaries, Ravarika (or Verkey), who was of Antemoro origin. He wrote three Biblical texts in three languages (English, Malagasy and French) in sorabe that demonstrated the instability of the script for the purposes intended.8

Radama set up a palace school and ordered that the children of nobility take instruction. There was occasional resistance to Radama’s program but inroads gained were significant.

4 Brown, Madagascar Rediscovered 135.
6 Munthe, La Tradition arabico-malgache 7.
7 Dahl, Les Débuts de l’orthographe malgache 34.
8 Munthe, La Tradition arabico-malgache 27.
In 1828 Radama died and his wife assumed the throne, choosing the name, Ranavalona I (1790-1861). After a few years, the progress of Christianity in the population helped clearly to delineate for Ranavalona that the missionary project would undermine her authority and replace her and her ancestors with the new Ancestor, Jesus. Ultimately, she banned Christianity, burned all Bibles that could be found, ordered practicing Christians executed, threw out the missionaries and built up the royal cult, taking indigenous religious expression to new highs. The LMS continued to support Christians in Madagascar but clandestinely. With Ranavalona’s death in 1861 her son, Radama II (1829-1863), assumed the throne and, being a Europhile like his father, opened the country once again to European influence and mission work.

During the persecutions, many Christians escaped Imerina and fled to other parts of the island where they settled and shared their faith. As a result, congregations were established in Betsileo, in the middle south of the island. The area was controlled by the Merina regime but the atmosphere was a bit freer. Missionaries, reaching these areas after the ban was lifted following the death of Ranavalona I, were surprised to find flourishing congregations already present. After the ban was lifted, military and civil administrative functionaries carried the faith to their postings, further expanding Christianity without mission influence. This gives Malagasy Christianity an unusual position in the history of missions and colonization: it developed, at its most crucial stage, as a Malagasy movement,

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10 Radama I died 18 months before Radama II was born. This was considered miraculous, but speculation that Radama II’s father was a European was rampant given his appearance.

11 Bloch, *From Blessing to Violence* 23.
not a European effort and, in many ways, remains a Malagasy movement. The first foreign missionary in the Betsileo area was M. Richardson and he arrived in 1870.

While Pier Larson has shown rather convincingly that the LMS was very reluctant to allow for indigenous leadership of the church, conditions made it necessary.\textsuperscript{12} When, in 1869, Ranavalona II (d.1885) and her husband, the Prime Minister Rainilaiarivony (1828-1896) were baptized the service was kept a complete secret from the missionaries living nearby and the sacrament was administered by a Malagasy pastor.\textsuperscript{13} The newly planted church had an independent streak and certainly the monarchy was not going to be co-opted by the missions. This newly planted church was in the ironic position of being the state church. After all, the LMS Congregationalists were Dissenters! To show that the church was under the control of the monarch and not the mission, Prime Minister Ralaiariarivony had a palace church constructed.\textsuperscript{14}

With Ranavalona II’s conversion, Christianity was able to spread more readily with those same public servants sent to administer the provinces of the Merina Empire. This did little to endear the faith to subjugated populations.\textsuperscript{15} This also meant a faith born of the old rule \textit{cuius regio, eius religio}.

In 1868 missionaries from the Norwegian Mission Society (NMS) arrived on the island. Bishop Hans Palludan Smith Schreuder (1817-1882), the missionary bishop sent by


\textsuperscript{13} Brown, \textit{Madagascar Rediscovered} 208.

\textsuperscript{14} Brown, \textit{Madagascar Rediscovered} 210.

\textsuperscript{15} Andrew Burgess, \textit{Zanahary in South Madagascar} (Minneapolis, Minnesota: The Board of Foreign Missions, 1932). For a description of how the first American missionary in Madagascar, the Rev. J.P. Hogstad, viewed the condition of a church primarily populated by Tanosy but overseen by Merina in Fort Dauphin before 1895, see pp 144-146 of Burgess’ work.
the NMS to Natal Colony in South Africa, had had an exploratory visit to the island in 1867.¹⁶ Under agreement with the LMS, the NMS took up the work in the southern parts of the island. The LMS was careful to limit the NMS to the southern tribes, seeming to mean primarily the Betsileo though the NMS interpreted this to mean the Vakinankaratra who are often considered “Imerina South.” Because the LMS had stations in Betsileo, a certain amount of the work went on side by side. The LMS ceded some areas to the NMS. The conversion of Rainisoalambo, the founder of the first significant revival movement, to Christianity is thus a story of two churches.

Before turning to Rainisoalambo, however, a picture of the larger situation in Madagascar and especially in Betsileo is required. In the larger realm of international politics and commerce, Madagascar was of interest to European powers for two primary reasons. First and foremost, it was a re-supply stop for shipping coming from Europe around the Cape of Good Hope to India and the Orient and provided a defensive position for guarding those routes. There had been several attempts at colonization, especially on the east coast (Fort Dauphin, Ile Ste. Marie, Tamatave, Diego Suarez) but few had ever gained a foothold. The most notable of those footholds comes from the island, Ile Ste. Marie, northeast of the port of Tamatave that was a reputed haven for pirates and gave rise to a “pirate kingdom.” The second important interest that Europeans had in Madagascar was for replenishing supplies and the work force for the sugar plantations on Ile Bourbon (Reunion Island) and Ile Maurice (Mauritius). The slave trade was of significant importance to the French who had settled the previously uninhabited Ile Bourbon and Ile Maurice and were

exporting sugar back to the continent. With the close of the Napoleonic wars in 1814, Ile Maurice was taken by the British, becoming Mauritius. At the same time, the anti-slavery movement in Britain had succeeded in implementing a ban on the trade in slaves and imposed this throughout the empire. Sir Robert Farquhar, the governor of Mauritius, had sought the alliances with Radama I as a way of ending the trade in slaves, especially to the crippled economy of Ile Bourbon. Radama took advantage of the situation to expand his kingdom.\textsuperscript{17}

The French never lost interest in Madagascar. In 1855, Joseph Lambert, a French trader signed a charter with King Radama II (1829-1863) in which the \textit{Compagnie de Madagascar} was given extensive rights in the country including land and mineral rights and the right to mint Madagascar’s currency. The Malagasy government would receive 10\% of the profits. The agreement proved so unpopular that on the night of May 11-12, 1863, Radama II was assassinated by strangulation.\textsuperscript{18} The new government of Queen Rasoherina repudiated the agreement and paid an indemnity of 1.2 million francs.\textsuperscript{19} Later, the French pressed a war along the coasts in 1883-1885. After the opening of the Suez Canal, in 1869, however the British began to lose interest in Madagascar as a way station on the route to India. Their attention had been drawn to Egypt and a strong desire to secure their position there by securing the Nile headwaters. Securing Zanzibar on the eastern flank, therefore, seemed in their interest. A deal was arranged with Germany for protectorate rights over Zanzibar but in contravention of an existing agreement that had included France previously.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{17} For a more detailed account, see Brown, \textit{Madagascar Rediscovered} 131-51.
\textsuperscript{19} Covell, \textit{Historical Dictionary of Madagascar} 125; Brown, \textit{Madagascar Rediscovered} 203.
\end{flushright}
In the pact of 1890, referred to as the Convention of Zanzibar, Britain begrudgingly agreed to cede influence over Madagascar to France in exchange for influence over Zanzibar.\textsuperscript{20} French economic interests multiplied in Madagascar. The Malagasy government was under increasing pressure from France to accede more and more to its demands. The treaty ending the Franco-Malagasy War of 1883-1885 had, in the French mind, established certain trade and protectorate rights over Madagascar. French financial interests were pressed, reaching to Betsileo as well. The penalty of 10 million francs to be paid to the French by the Merina government was still demanded. From 1885 to 1895, the French pressed their financial interests on an ever-weakening Malagasy monarchy. Betsileo thus had two overlords: the Merina royalty and the French. Neither was kind.

The Merina government, because of corruption and external pressure, was unable to defend the southern and western borders of Betsileo from marauding tribes, and beginning in 1870 there were repeated raids by the Bara to the south and the Sakalava to the west.\textsuperscript{21} In feudal fashion, the Betsileo monarchy ruled their kingdom under the protection of the Merina crown. They also suffered the presence of the Merina military and governors. The Merina government used forced labor (fanomboana or corvée) for road building, gold mining and the construction of irrigation canals and dikes for riziculture. This often pulled off the able-bodied men from their own farm production at critical times. Finally, the Merina crown imposed a head tax (hetra) and the fitia tsy mba hetra (the-act-of-love-that-is-not-quite-a-tax) on all men over the age of ten in a vain attempt to raise money to pay the treaty obligations

\textsuperscript{20} Roger Rafanomezantsoa, “The Contributions of Rainisoalambo (1844-1904), the Father of Revivals, to the Indigenization of the Protestant Churches in Madagascar: a Historical Perspective,” University of Kwa-Zulu Natal-Pietermaritzburg, 2004, 46; Brown, Madagascar Rediscovered 234.

made to the French after the war. This was imposed on all men with the exception of slaves and military personnel.\(^2^2\) Betsileo had been a vassal state since Andrianampoinimerina had sent a *lamba* with a hole cut in it to the southern Betsileo king, Andriamanalina III (1796-1815). The message was clear and not terribly subtle. Andriamanalina would be cut out of Andrianampoinimerina’s realm if he did not submit as a vassal. Andriamanalina III responded by sending a reed cut to his own height. Again, the message was clear. Whoever was the tallest would be served by the other. Andrianampoinimerina was taller. Shortly after the symbolic battle, the other rulers of Betsileo submitted as well.\(^2^3\) So from the earliest part of the nineteenth century, Betsileo found itself under Merina domination. At the end of the nineteenth century, Betsileo was a country in serious decline.

Rainisoalambo was born sometime in or about the year 1844.\(^2^4\) He was the child of a special class of court functionaries known as *Marambasia*\(^2^5\) who were servants of the Betsileo King of Isandra, Rajaokarivony I (1826-1861) and especially attended to the upbringing and education of the king’s offspring. While he was still an infant, Rainisoalambo’s father died and the king took him into his household to be raised, affording


\(^{23}\) Brown, *Madagascar Rediscovered* 127. For a somewhat different version, see Frédéric Randriamamonjy, *Tantaran’i Madagasikara Isam-Paritra* (Antananarivo: Trano Printy Fiagonana Loterana Malagasy, 2001) 311-12. Randriamamonjy cites instead a positive decision on the part of Andriamanalina III in 1787 to enter into a *fatidrā* (blood brother) relationship by sending a piece of liver with his own blood on it for Andrianampoinimerina to eat with the ritual being reversed for him.

\(^{24}\) Rafanomezantsoa, “The Contributions of Rainisoalambo (1844-1904), the Father of Revivals, to the Indigenization of the Protestant Churches in Madagascar: a Historical Perspective,” 51. Rafanomezantsoa states his conclusion more positively but the evidence still is inconclusive.

\(^{25}\) *Marambasia*, according to a note by Rasamoela Jaona in Thunem & Rasamoela’s history of Rainisoalambo, refers to a “strong” (*marana*) “bullet or gun” (*basia*), hence a person armed to defend something or someone important. Thunem, Rasamoela et al., *Ny Tantaran’ny Fifohazana* 12.
him all the privileges and education of a prince. He was known then as Razaimbola, or
“Vola’s younger brother,” Vola being the child of the king. A strong convention in
Malagasy life, once a person has a child, their name is changed to reflect the fact.
Rainisoalambo literally translates as “Father of Soalambo” and would have been conferred
upon him after the birth of his daughter.²⁶ Radaniela notes that one of the strong skills that
Rainisoalambo learned in the royal court was that of public speaking, kabary.

Koa noho izany dia tonga nahay kabary izy ka nandresy lahatra mandrakariva. Noho
ny fahaizany handresy lahatra, dia nokaramain’ny olona, izay sendra nanan-kabary
hatao, izy, ka tonga mpisolovava (Avocat). Saiky ny tanàn-dehibe nitoeran’ny
andriana tompo-menakely sy nipetrahan’ny gouverneur ambanianandro, dia nanaovany
kabary avokoa, ary nandresy mandrakariva izy na taiza na taiza, na dia tsy araky ny
marina aza.

And so because of this he became good at oratory and was always convincing.
Because he was able to convince so well people hired him whenever they had a
kabary (oration/court case) to do and so he became a lawyer. He gave kabary in
almost all the large cities where the ruling nobility were located and the Merina
governors lived and he won no matter where and no matter the truth of his case.²⁷

Along with his education in kabary, Rainisoalambo picked up the useful skills of a mpisikidy
(diviner by lots) and an ombiasa (traditional healer) making him much in demand according
to the reports,²⁸ but he himself reported that he had learned to divine by lots as a money-
making scheme and was not very good at it.²⁹ After King Rajaokarivony I died,
Rainisoalambo continued as Marambasia in Rajaokarivony II’s (1863-1892) court and again

²⁶ Oliva Razaka, “Ny Asam-piraision ao amin’ny Fifohazana Tobilehibe Soatanana,” 2003, 4,
Rafanomezantsoo, “The Contributions of Rainisoalambo (1844-1904), the Father of Revivals, to the
Indigenization of the Protestant Churches in Madagascar: a Historical Perspective,” 51, Radaniela,
²⁸ Thunem, Rasamoela et al., Ny Tantaran’ny Fifohazana 13, James Rabehatonina, Tantaran’ny Fifohazana
19-20.
²⁹ Radaniela, “Filazana Fohifohy ny Tantaran-dRainisoalambo,” 82.
in Queen Ramavo’s (1892-1895) court though by then he was feeling his age and in 1892 he retired, installing his son as Marambasia in his place. He then began farming in his native village of Ambalavato-Ambatoreny.

Because of his associations with nobility and as an emissary of the monarch, Rainisoalambo had occasion to visit with the Merina governors and nobility who served in Betsileo. Many were Christian and he took interest in their practice, including attending services. Christianity was not therefore foreign to his experience.

In addition to the political instability of the time, there was an outbreak of severe illnesses, including the Spanish influenza, typhoid and smallpox. Given the already difficult financial situation of Betsileo, the effect was near catastrophic. Approximately 30,000 of the estimated 250,000 inhabitants of the region had died; many were unable to farm properly and maintain themselves. Rainisoalambo soon found himself among them.

In 1884 Rainisoalambo had accepted baptism as a Christian in an LMS congregation (he refers to it as a fiangonana independenta or “independent church”) and was soon encouraged by his peers to become a leader in the church in order to earn a living.

According to Jaquier-Dubourdieu, he had at least six months of theological training at an LMS center and then was posted to a congregation where he was not paid. This situation did not please him and he soon reverted to his previous practice as an ombiasa, ignoring the

30 Radaniela, “Filazana Fohifohy ny Tantaran-dRainisoalambo,” 83.


33 Radaniela, “Filazana Fohifohy ny Tantaran-dRainisoalambo,” 83.
authority of the teacher-evangelists who would have been his superiors.\textsuperscript{34} Rabehatonina notes that he was probably a catechist or \textit{solompitandrina} – “one who takes the place of the pastor.”\textsuperscript{35} Rainisoalambo in his own words:

\begin{quote}
Taty aoriana izahay dia narary tsiraray ka nihareraka tamin' ny fivelomana. Nefa ny mpisikidy dia nisikidy ihany, ary ny fivavahana amin' ny fahasivy (ny razana) dia natao ihany, ary ny fanompoan-tsampy samihafa dia tso najanona, fa notehirizina sy nira-vahana, mba hahazoana fitahiana hasisitrana ny marary. Tsy nety sitrana anefa ny marary, fa vao mainka nihahe aza ny aretina namely anay mianakavy. Ny ssasany nangotsoka tamin' ny taolana sy ny ozatra ka nalemy tsy nahay nandeha, fa nandady; ny ssasany ferena ny tenany ka mainbo, ary ny ssasany tonga jamba, fa ny ssasany kosa dridrana ny tongo kana mainbo; ary ny ssasany tazoina sy feno vay ratsy ary hatenina. \textit{Efa dimy taona no niandohan' ny aretin' ny ssasany ka mbola tso afaka, ary ny ssasany efa-taona, ny ssasany telo taona, ny roa taona, ny iray taona no naharariany. Mafy mihtsy no nanjo anay tamin' izay, fa ny hanina lany, ny hanao tso misy, ary ny fitafiana rovitra, ka vorodamba sy tsihy no nitafigana. Ny ankohonako, izay tso teo amiko, dia tso nety nanatona ahy noho ny aretina sy ny fahantrana nanjo, fa ny tenako feno fery be hatrany an-doha ka hatrany an-tongotra, ka tso nahavita na inona na inona.}

Mbola nanana omby fito aho tamin' izay, hany ireo no sisa. Nisy sakaizako anankiray nitondra olona nisa ny tanimiriko. Vita ny asa, kanefa nataon' ny mpiasa vaeventy ny bainga, sady nataony nifanongoa maromaro, ka tonga tahaka ny tatao nitokotoko eran'ny tanimbary. Niantso ny zana-kavavy aho hanamboatra ireo; rehefa akaiky ny fanetsana, dia tso izy indray andro, nefa tso vita ny asa, ka dia nampaka azy indray aho tamin' ny andro hafa. Tsy nety intsony izy ireo, fa nandà hoe: Mba hanao ny anay izahay, fa tso fanjakan' andriana izao ka haneraena anay; mianina (mijanôna) raha tso mahavita. Raha nahare izany aho, dia nisento, ka latsaka ny ranomaso, sady niteny aho. hoe: Raha mba olona mantsy ireo omby fito ireo, dia azoko nirahina hiasa. Aleoko tso misy ireo na dia iray akory aza, raha mba olona no omen' Andriamanitra ahy. Tsy ny razana no nantsotko tamin' izay, fa Andriamanitra, Izay nanao ny zavatra rehetra, fa efa nahare matetika ny amin' Andriamanitra tokana ivavahan' ny kristiana aho, satria matetika aho no nanaraka ny hova (andriana) nankany am-piangonana, raha niangona izy, ka nandre toriteny matetika. – \textit{Efa vita batisa koa aho tamin' izay, kanefa kristiana ara-keviny, fa ny fanao sy ny toetra dia mbola tso niava, satria nofitahin' olona aho hoe: Hatao mpitandrina, raha mety hatao batisa, ka hahazo vola amin' ny vazaha. Ny hoe hahazo vola no nandrosoako hatao batisa, fa tso ny fibebahana; nefa tso tanteraka izany, fa}
\end{quote}


Isaky ny njery ny tanimbariko aho, dia nisento noho ny tsy fananako olona ka naniry mba homen' Andriamanitra olona. Nohainoin' Andriamanitra tokoa ny faniriako sy ny fisentoaon' ny foko mandrakariva, fa tao anatin' ny taona iray dia fongana tsy nisy ny omby fito, ka vao mainka latsaka tamin' ny farafahantrana izahay mianakavy, fa ny aretina namely, ary ny olona hanao raharaha tsy nisy, ka dia very hevitra izahay rehetra, satria lany avokoa izay rehetra nananana. Nieritreritra andro aman' alina aho, fa ny kabary fanao dia tsy azo natao intsony, ary ny asa tany tsy efa intsony, ny nananana lany tamin' ny aretina. Ny sikidy sy ny sampy ary ny fivavahana amin' ny fahasyvy (ny razana) dia tsy nisy asany intsony, na dia natao sy nivavahana aza: Tsy dia nahalala hivavaka amin' Andriamanitra aho, kanefa tery noho ny nanjao anay mba hiantso Azy noho ny fahaterena ka nisento mandrakariva hoe: Nahoana re izahay, Andriamanitra, ô! no dia nidiran-douza toy itony? Enga anie ka mba ho afaka izao manjo anay izao!

Izany fahoriana izany no niandohan' ny niandotrao'ny niandotrao' Andriamanitra ahy, ary ny fisentoaona avy amin' izay no nitarihany sy namazany ny saiko sy ny fanahiko hiankina aminy irery ihany. Koa rehefa notarihin' Andriamanitra hivavaka aminy aho, dia sitrana aho; ary rehefa nampahatsiavoniny, dia nitety trano aho ka nampanary ny ody rehetra isan-trano, ary izay nanaiky ny fivavahana ka nety nanary, ny odiny, dia sitrana vetivy, na karazan' inona na karazan' inona, ka dia nivavaka izahay tamin' ny taona 1894.

Rehefa lany ireo ombiko fito ireo, ka latsaka tamin' ny fahoriana mafy izahay, dia avy tsirairay nanatona teo amiko ireo ankohonako tsy nanatona ahy taloha, ka dia nihamaro izahay, na dia izany aza no nanjo.

After that each one of us was sick and became increasingly tired at earning a living. The diviners-by-lots casts lots anyway, and the prayers to the ‘ninth’ (ancestors) were made anyway, and the service of the different idols did not stop but were kept and adorned in order to get the blessings that would heal the sick. But the sick could not be healed but rather the illness that struck our family got worse. One part [of the family] had pain in the bone and in the tendons and so were weak, unable to walk and so they crawled; another part were covered in sores and had a stench, and another part became blind and yet another part had ulcers on their legs and gave a stench; and another part had fever (malaria) and were full of awful boils and itchy. It had already been five years that some had been sick and yet were still not free of it, and some had been sick for four years, some three years, two years, one year being the length of their illness. Truly hard was the grief we suffered at that time for our food was gone, there was nothing to do, and the clothing was tattered, and so [we] were clothed in rags and grass mats. My immediate family, those not right there with me, were not willing to approach me because of the disease and the poverty that grieved me for I myself was covered from head to foot with many sores and could not finish anything.
I still had seven head of cattle at that time, though those were the last. There was one friend of mine who brought people to work my rice fields. The work was done but the workers made the clods of earth too big and they piled them in many mounds and it became like many covered heads around the rice field. I called my relatives’ children to fix them; when close to the planting of the rice shoots they came one day but they didn’t finish. I caused them to come again another day but they didn’t finish. But they were no longer willing and refused saying, “We have to take care of our own. This isn’t the government of the nobility anymore and so we could be forced, stopped if we haven’t finished.” When I heard that I sighed and my tears fell and at that point I said, “If those seven ox were people, I could send them to work. I would prefer that they were not there, not even one, if God would still give me people.” I didn’t call on the ancestors at that time, but God, the One who made everything, for I had often heard about the sole God to whom the Christians prayed, for I had often followed the Hova (nobility) [Hova = Merina] going to church when they assembled and often heard sermons. – I was baptized then but I was a Christian in name only, but in practice and character I had not yet changed because I was deceived by people who said, “Become a pastor, if you are willing to be baptized, and get money from the foreigners.” That “get money” was what drove me to be baptized, not repentance; it did not come to pass; it only got my hopes up. Anyway that did me good afterwards for at that time I began to learn to read and read not so poorly, because I should be a pastor you see and would have to read and preach. I was baptized in the independent church.

Every time I looked at my rice fields I sighed because I had no people and I wished God would give me people. And God knew my wish and the eternal sighs of my heart, for within a year all seven ox perished and were no more, and so me and my family fell into the furthest depths of poverty, the diseases hit us, the people to do things were no more, and we had no ideas left for everything that we had was spent. I pondered this night and day for the kabary I was used to giving I could not do anymore, and the working of the land I was not able any longer, and our possessions were spent on disease. The casting of lots and the idols and the prayers to the ninth (ancestors) didn’t work anymore, even if they were done and prayed to. I didn’t really know how to pray to God but I was forced because of our grief to call upon him because of the compulsion and cried out all the time saying, “Why is it, O God, that we have come into calamity such as as this? Please let us be free from what now grieves us!”

That grief was the beginning of God’s call to me and with the sighing from that he led me and awakened my mind and my spirit to depend upon him alone. And so when I was led by God to pray to him, I was healed; and when he caused me to remember, then I went around the house and caused all the ody (talismans) in each room (or house) and those who accepted the faith (here, literally “praying”) and were willing to throw away their talismans were healed quickly, no matter what type it was and so we prayed in the year 1894.
When those seven ox were gone, then we fell into the worst suffering and each of those members of my family who did not come before came one by one and we became many even though that was our grief.\textsuperscript{36}

Rainisoalambo’s healing and conversion took place on October 15, 1894. On June 9\textsuperscript{th} of the following year, he gathered twelve of his friends and family who had also experienced healing of a miraculous sort and they formed an association. On each of these he laid his hands and they all agreed to carry the name \textit{Mpiana
try ny Tompo} (“Disciples of the Lord”). Rainisoalambo took on the role of being their teacher, receiving some books from Theodor Olsen, the NMS missionary stationed in Soatanana.\textsuperscript{37} Olsen received this new association with some enthusiasm as he had been presiding over a very discouraging field. His letters

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{three_revival_leaders}
\caption{Three revival leaders in Soatanana. From the left: Raiseremia with his wife, Rainitiaray with his wife, Rainisoalambo with his wife, c. 1898. (NMS Archives)}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{36} Radaniela, “Filazana Fohifohy ny Tantaran-dRainisoalambo,” 82-83. My translation.

\textsuperscript{37} Thunem, Rasamoela et al., \textit{Ny Tantaran’ny Fifohazana} 17.
home are filled with references to the problem of the French occupation and the new advantages being taken by the Jesuits who had been given something of a free hand by the Governor General, Gallieni. He recounts his frustrations at the change in status that the Protestant missions endured under a new regime, as well as his concerns for the region in which he is serving. Recounted in his wife’s letters are the horrors of the Menalamba (Red Shawls) revolt in which LMS missionaries were attacked and killed in reprisal for the European takeover of their land.38 Another reason Olsen was positively predisposed to Rainisoalambo’s movement was that his wife, Anna Hauge Olsen, was a descendent of Norway’s great, lay revival leader, Hans Nilsen Hauge.39 In a letter excerpted by Thunem, Olsen recounts his joy at meeting with and preaching to the new movement. The letter is dated February 6, 1896 and already there was a group of 30 or 40 meeting regularly for prayer and instruction.40

At that first meeting on June 9th, 1895, the group decided upon a simple rule for their community:

_Tsy maintsy hianatra vakiteny, mba hahaizana mamaky ny Baiboly._
_Hianatra marika sy soratra, mba hahaizana manoratra sy hahalalana ny toko sy ny andininy ao amin’ny Soratra Masina._
_Hanao bango volo ny vevihavy, ary ny lehilahy tsy hanao sanga._
_Ny trano sy ny tokotany dia hatao madio, ary ny fanaovana afo dia hanaovana lakozy._
_Hanao saha sy hamboly hazo sy ny zava-pihinana rehetra mba hahabe ny hanina._
_Izay rehetra atao dia hatomboka amin’ny fivavahana sy hatao amin’ny anaran’I Jesosy._

39 Razaka, “Ny Asam-piraiana ao amin’ny Fifohazana Tobilehibe Soatanana,” 14, Thunem, Rasamoela et al., _Ny Tantaran’ny Fifohazana_ 11.
40 Thunem, Rasamoela et al., _Ny Tantaran’ny Fifohazana_ 17.
Reading must be studied so as to be able to read the Bible. Study arithmetic and writing so as to be able to write and to know the chapter and verse in Holy Scripture. The women will plait their hair and the men will not leave their hair long over the forehead (translator: like a cockscomb). The house and yard shall be kept clean and for the fire there will be a kitchen. Make fields and plant trees and everything edible in order to increase what can be eaten. Everything to be done will be begun with prayer and will be done in the name of Jesus. Cloth and clean clothes, hymns, prayers and a sermon are what is to be done at the burial of the dead, but not the funeral obsequies.  

This is the basic rule for the community. There are other pieces to which we will come later. Here it should be pointed out that reading was not for its own sake, but for being able to access Holy Scripture. Rainisoalambo had noted that he was “not so bad” at reading and this was a blessing, a consequence of his having studied for the ministry before his true conversion. Radaniela points out that only three of the twelve could read “not so badly,” as well. The point is that these are not sophisticated readers making critical analyses of texts. These are folk without a Western education with simple reading skills decoding texts that they may or may not have heard preached in previous encounters with the church.  

In October 1898 Rainisoalambo chose eight of the Disciples of the Lord to become apostoly (apostles, later referred to in Malagasy as iraka or messengers) whom he would send to preach outside of Ambalavato-Ambatoreny. The plan was not grand at first. These apostles would be sent to neighboring communities in the region of Isandra for not more than

41 Thunem, Rasamoela et al., *Ny Tantaran’ny Fifohazana* 88-89. My translation.
42 Radaniela, “Filazana Fohifohy ny Tantaran-dRainisoalambo,” 84.
two weeks, when they were expected to return for further instruction. By 1900 there were 16 apostoly and by 1904 there were 41 (39 men, 2 women) having reached as far as Imerina and were taking longer stays away from home, even up to a year.\textsuperscript{43}

The first eight apostles were given two themes for their sermons: repentance (Matt. 4:17) and love (John 13:34-35). Rainisoalambo instructed them on these texts. The message was planned to be simple and direct with no flowery language. His advice sounds almost a biblical quote:

\begin{quote}
Hianareo izay tsy mba mahay inona no hitory amin'ny mpampianatra, amin'ny Pastora, amin'ny Evanjelista, hananatra ny kely sy ny lehibe, ny adala sy ny hendry. Ary izay avelanareo heloka dia voavela, ary ny aretina dia handositra. Aza manao toy ny fanaon'ny mpitoriteny ankehitriny; mitory nefa tsy manasitrana aretina sady tsy mamoaka demonia; fa ataovy daholo izany rehetra izany.
\end{quote}

You who are not capable of (or educated in) anything are those who will preach to teachers, to Pastors, to Evangelists, give advice to big and small, to fools and to the wise. And those whose sins you forgive are forgiven, and the diseases will flee away. Do not do as the custom of today’s preachers who preach but do not cure disease and also do not exorcise demons, rather do all of that.\textsuperscript{44}

To the above themes, Rainisoalambo added eight more: humility (Matt. 18:4), endurance (Luke 21:19), prayer (Luke 18), faith (John 14:12-17), holiness (1 Peter 1:13-16), hope (1 Tim. 3:1-17), judgment (Matt. 25:31-46) and holy unity (John 17).\textsuperscript{45} These themes were learned well so that the apostle could preach on it with confidence. Confidence was not, however, their first experience. Thunem notes that “they went but were quite afraid,

\textsuperscript{43} Radanieda, “Filazana Fohifohy ny Tantaran-dRainisoalambo,” 86.

\textsuperscript{44} Thunem, Rasamoela et al., Ny Tantaran’ny Fifohazana 21. My translation.

hesitated, became sick and stopped.”

This state clearly did not last. The apostoly became more bold and ventured further and further afield.

The Norwegian missionary, the Rev. Dr. Christian Borchgrevink (b. 1841-d.1919, in Madagascar 1869-1912), after noting the loud and boisterous manner of prayer and exorcism evidenced by the Disciples of the Lord, then notes


In their preaching, however, they are very calm and controlled. One of their main texts is John 13:34-35 which they explain in a simple and touching way. In their daily life they are industrious, eager, devoted and helpful. As a whole they remind us very much of Hauges’ friends at home.

By 1907 the Disciples of the Lord had entered strongly into the region north of the major port of Tamatave (Toamasina) where the French Protestant missionary Elisée Escande had just begun to serve. His ministry would take him back and forth to this region until 1924 and that gave him time to assess the work of the movement in the area. On arrival he was particularly distressed to find the churches under his administration deeply divided on the subject of the Fifohazana. Some felt it was comical and not dignified for the Church of Christ while others felt that it was truly a movement of the Spirit renewing and expanding the church. Among those who expressed dismay at the work of the Fifohazana was the teacher-


evangelist with whom he would have to work.\textsuperscript{48} One of the concerns raised for Escande was that the French authorities might take exception to the form of worship that the exorcisms represented, a form too much associated with the traditional religious beliefs of the Malagasy, appearing to the French authorities as sorcery.\textsuperscript{49} He therefore met with the apostoly, Ramarijaona, and came to an agreement that the laying on of hands for healing and exorcism would not take place in the church but could be done in more private settings.\textsuperscript{50} Thus was his curiosity about this movement piqued and he became quite appreciative of this indigenous expression of the faith. He continued though to maintain certain reservations about the efficacy of the healings proclaimed, stating that to his knowledge no European or missionary colleague had ever observed a successful healing.\textsuperscript{51} What Escande has to say about the preaching of the apostoly, however, is most interesting in regard to our project:

\begin{quote}
Leur enseignement est foncièrement bibliq
ue et scriptuaire au plus haut point. La Bible est pour eux, au sens littéral du mot, la Parole de Dieu. S'ils ne s'étaient pas appelés Disciples du Seigneur, nous les aurions désignés sous le nom « d'hommes ou de femmes de la Bible ». Comme ils l'aiment, comme ils la connaissent! N'est-ce pas le seul livre qu'ils lisent? Ne constitue-t-il pas à lui tout seul (avec leur Recueil de cantiques) toute leur bibliothèque? Son enseignement n'est-il pas leur seule science? C'est dire que leur bagage intellectuel et scientifique est des plus légers. Ce sont, le plus grand nombre, des ignorants, des incultes. S'ils savent tous lire, nous n'oserions affirmer qu'ils sachent tous écrire. Ils ne comprennent rien à la théologie; très attachés à la lettre des Ecritures, ils mettent sur le même plan tous les livres de la Bible, ceux de l'Ancien comme ceux du Nouveau Testament. Ils n'ont aucune notion des époques auxquelles ils ont été écrits, ils ignorent tout, tant de leurs auteurs que des personnes auxquelles ils étaient primitivement destinés. Aussi donnent-ils la même valeur aux ordres de Moïse concernant la loi cérémonielle qu'aux enseignements de Jésus-Christ. Ce sont de véritables théopneustes sans le savoir.
Leur enseignement n'est pas profond, leurs allocutions (nous n'osons dire leurs


\textsuperscript{49} Escande, \textit{Les Disciples du Seigneur} 35.

\textsuperscript{50} Escande, \textit{Les Disciples du Seigneur} 41.

\textsuperscript{51} Escande, \textit{Les Disciples du Seigneur} 43.

Mais alors ils savent ce qu'ils veulent. Ils affirment avec la puissance que leur donnent leurs fortes convictions, le péché et trois de ses conséquences : la maladie, l'esclavage et la mort, le salut gratuit et universel par la Croix à tous ceux qui se repentent et qui croient, la sanctification, victoire sur le péché, et l'amour fraternal.

En général, les Disciples du Seigneur que j'ai entendus ne sont pas de bons prédicateurs, ils lisent et parlent avec une monotonie désespérante. Il n'y a pas d'orateurs parmi eux, à moins que quelque Évangéliste ou Mpitandrina ou instituteur sortis d'une de nos Missions ne se soient unis à eux. Aussi ai-je toujours été étonné, en les écoutant, de constater l'influence qu'ils exercent et le bien qu'ils accomplissent. Et certainement beaucoup parmi mes lecteurs, doivent aussi se demander comment il se fait, qu'avec si peu de moyens, ils puissent obtenir de tels résultats, alors que tant de leurs compatriotes, évangélistes, pasteurs, prédicateurs aussi pieux qu'eux en apparence, bien plus éloquents qu'eux, sont loin d'en atteindre de pareils.

Their teaching is fundamentally biblical and scriptural to the highest degree. The Bible is for them, in the literal sense of the word, the Word of God. If they had not called themselves the Disciples of the Lord, we would have to designate them with the name “the men or women of the Bible.” How they love it; how they know it! Is it not the sole book that they read? Does it not constitute for them (with their hymnal) their entire library? Is not its teaching their sole science? That is to say that their intellectual and scientific baggage is lighter. They are, for the large numbers, ignorant, uncultured. If they all know how to read, we dare affirm that they all know how to write. They understand nothing of theology; strongly attached to the letter of Scripture, they put on the same level all the books of the Bible, those of the Old as those of the New Testament. They have no notion of the epochs in which they had been written, they are unaware of all, whether their authors or the persons to whom they were originally destined. They also give the same value to the orders of Moses concerning the ceremonial law as to the teaching of Jesus Christ. They are veritable theopneustes52 without knowing it. Their teaching is not profound, their allocutions (we do not dare say their discourses, sermons or preaching) are almost always the same, and turn around these texts: “Repent, convert, for the Kingdom of God is near” (Mark 1:15). “Heal the sick. Drive out demons” (Matt. 10:8). “I give you a new commandment: love one another. Love one another as I have loved you” (John 12:34 and 15:12).

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52 See “theopneusty,” Webster’s Revised Unabridged Dictionary (C. & G. Merriam Co., 1913), vol. The word derives from the Greek and refers to the epithet given the Greek priests when they were seized by the prophetic spirit. In Greek the word means, “god-breathed.”
But then they know what they want. They maintain, with the power that gives them their strong convictions, sin and its three consequences: sickness, slavery and death, free and universal salvation by the Cross to all who repent and believe, sanctification, victory over sin and brotherly love.

In general, the Disciples of the Lord that I have heard are not very good preachers; they read and speak with a hopeless monotony. There are no orators among them, unless some of our Evangelists or Mpitandrina (pastors) or teachers who come out of our Missions be united with them. Also I have always been surprised, in listening to them, to notice the influence that they exert and the good that they accomplish. And certainly many among my readers must also ask themselves how they do it, for with so little means they can receive such results, so that many of their compatriots, evangelists, pastors, preachers equally pious in appearance as they are, more eloquent than them, are long from achieving an equal.53

I wish to highlight several observations made by Escande above. First is the fact that the Disciples of the Lord made no distinction between the Old and New Testaments but viewed them all as existing in the same plane. They make no distinction between the original recipients of the writings and the current readers. Rabeony makes the same claim five years before Escande and in almost exactly the same words.54 In Malagasy communication, according to Øyvind Dahl, meaning is derived in a “high context” culture. Malagasy, especially those of the highlands (including the Betsileo ethnic group) speak in circumlocutions as a matter of course.55 Context is everything. As a primarily oral people, these early Disciples of the Lord, exhibit the traits of an oral thinking process. Lévi-Strauss concluded that the “savage mind” totalizes.56 We might today take some exception to the term “savage” but here we translate the term to mean “uneducated in the literate tradition.”

“It is in this intransigent refusal on the part of the savage mind to allow anything human (or even living) to remain alien to it, that the real principle of dialectical reason is to be found.”

The non-literate mind takes all of reality to be equally present and equally reciprocally referencing. In stylistic terms this may mean that coordinating conjunctions predominate when subordinating conjunctions might better define a story or situation. By leaving coordinating conjunctions, the more orally based storyteller or author leaves the listener/reader to make the appropriate choice of how the parts of the story relate. In more general terms, the communication context is purposely left open. As a written communication – here the Bible – is by nature a de-contextualized communication, the person whose worldview is more orally based sees its entirety as the context. The field of available meaning does not immediately subordinate one part to another.

Here, the Disciples of the Lord keep all the books of Scripture available to them as of equal importance. Clearly, Rainisoalambo had pulled out themes he felt to be of primary importance but the context, which is here the text of Scripture itself, is equally available at all times. The book itself becomes the context that heretofore would have been the speaking event. An orally based community establishes context through direct experience (with the exception of reported speech), therefore the book rises in esteem for the non-literate. Whereas a literate user of Scriptures is trained to understand the context as being inferred, implied, supplied or assumed, the orally based user of Scriptures understands the book to be self-contextualizing.

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58 For a discussion on oral style and context the reader is referred to works such as Denny, “Rational thought in oral culture and literate decontextualization,” 66-89; Goody, *The Interface Between the Written and the Oral*; Ong, *Orality and Literacy* and *The Presence of the Word*.
This habit of thinking may in part reflect the high value placed upon any written text. Pier Larson describes how the number of readers in Imerina after the introduction of the printing press could not account for the sales of printed material in the population during the early part of the missionary project. The sales were just too high. The printed texts became talismans.\(^{59}\) Ludvig Munthe describes from his own research experience the veneration that the Antemoro had of their written texts in *sorabe* (Malagasy written in Arabic script). They hung texts in *kitapo* (cloth sacks often associated with holding important documents and money) from the ceiling of their homes and prostrated themselves before them. This essentially religious veneration of the written word was astounding to Munthe because they did so even though the text in question actually depicted the humiliation of the Antemoro at the hands of the French in 1659!\(^{60}\)

The book has no past because it is a living presence; its power is living. Hence, it is easy to see an equation to the *ody* (talisman) in traditional Malagasy religion. The Bible has its own *hasina*, or sacred power. The Disciples of the Lord are called upon to carry it always in their *kitapo* just beneath their clothing. While the primary reason for carrying the Scriptures is to have them available to read at any time, the manual put out by the by the Committee of the * Fifohazana Tobilehibe Ankaramalaza* notes that a *mpiandry* (shepherd/exorcist in the revival movements) “open [the book] in plain sight and all those gathered will see our Bible.”\(^{61}\) Or from *Ny Fampianarana napetra-dRangahy*

\(^{59}\) Larson, “‘Capacity and Modes of Thinking’: Intellectual Engagements and Subaltern Hegemony in the Early History of Malagasy Christianity,” 990. For more on writing as a magico-religious phenomenon see Goody, *The Interface Between the Written and the Oral*, especially pages 129-132.

\(^{60}\) Munthe, *La Tradition arabico-malgache* 231.

Rainisoalambo amin’ny Fifohazan’ny Tompo ao Soatanana (The Teaching left by Mr. Rainisoalambo for the Awakening by the Lord in Soatanana):

*Raha mamaky teny, na mametra-tanana dia ny tanana ankavia no mihaiona ny Baiboly na ny Filazantsara. Iny tanana an-kavia iny no eo akaiky ny fo; ary ny Boky Masina dia tokony hahankina eo an-tratra raha mametra-tanana. Tsy fanao ny mametraka ny Boky Masina amin’ny tany na amin’ny seza fipetrahan’olona.*

When reading, or when laying on hands the left hand is the one which holds the Bible or the New Testament. That left hand is the one close to the heart and the Holy Book should rest against the chest when laying on hands. *It is not the way things should be done when the Holy Book is placed on the ground or on a chair where people sit.*

From a theological position that sees the Bible as the Word of God and the Word of God as a living Being, the power associated with the object, not just its words, is a somewhat logical conclusion.

*Any written or printed text immediately is decontextualized from its author the moment it circulates away from that author. Speech, by contrast, goes out of existence as it is being said and so remains highly contextual.* For people whose lives are primarily, and in the case of Rainisoalambo and his followers up until their conversions, exclusively oral, meaning is derived from context. As Escande and Rabeony note, the Old and New Testaments are taken not only as equal but as not having a sense of “before and after” or of “author and audience.” When one speaks in Malagasy of the *Ntaolo*, one speaks of the corporate body of ancestors long ago and “long ago” is just outside immediate memory. By the same token, however, the *Ntaolo* are always with us. *Ny razana tsy mba maty* (the ancestors are not truly dead). There is a living exchange between the dead and the living that


enlivens speech and populates the context of the discourse. In this sense the text then also becomes the living voice of the Christian Ntaolo. So it is that an oral hermeneutic will not so much try to look beyond the horizon available to the receiver of the message but will integrate what is heard or read on the plane of existence in which she or he lives. If the ancestors are of the far past, that past, too, is present to the living in a real and live way. There is felt a continuity with what has been in a way that is not so clear to the modern, Western mind. I suspect that much of medieval and renaissance art depicting scenes from the Bible followed a similar strategy. The clothing and setting are those known to the artist and not attempts to be accurate to a style of clothing or a physical setting consonant with first century Palestine. The context assumed for interpretation in an orally based society is the one that they inhabit and one felt to be contiguous with their own.

In this sense, I believe, Rainisoalambo was able to read the gospels and Paul properly in many regards. If one considers the context of Rainisoalambo’s world, it is remarkably similar to that described by Theissen, Crossan and Horsley in their sociological approaches to Galilee in the first century. Betsileo, as described above, was a country in deep crisis, oppressed by two colonial overlords, extremely poor but having potential for good food production, and existing in a liminal phase as empires shifted around them. Galilee’s overlords were three, really: the Romans, the Herodians and the Priests. All demanded a debilitating tax. There was political instability and banditry. Disease was an


issue. Heavy demand was placed on inherited land to produce sufficient food for survival and to meet the tax burden. Rainisoalambo’s solution seems to come from a direct reading of Jesus’ program from the perspective of his own context.

Jesus sent out the disciples two by two with the instructions not to take more than what they needed for the immediate journey and gave them authority to cast out unclean spirits, preach and heal (Mark 6:7-13; Matthew 10:1-11; Luke 9:1-6). The disciples were to live off the hospitality of their hosts being freely recompensed for their labors by those whom they came to serve. An exchange is envisioned: the disciples heal and proclaim good news; the hosts feed and house the disciples. The work being done, the disciples move on.

So, too, Rainisoalambo instructed his apostoly. They went two by two; they carried only the food they needed for the journey to where they should arrive, and that food was provided by the Soatanana community from their hard work and from the spoonful they set aside at every meal. When they came to the villages and towns where they were sent, they would preach the good news, lay on hands for healing and remain in the homes that received them.

It may have been under pressure from the missions that the Fifohazana changed the designation of apostoly to iraka (sent one/messenger) but it is clear that the change occurred. What I find more interesting is the use of the term mpiandry for it has long been translated as “shepherd.” Mpiandry is the agent noun formed by taking the present active verb and inserting a “p” after the initial “m” in the word. The “m” then remains silent.

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67 Mark allows for sandals and staff. Luke does not mention sandals. Matthew forbids both sandals and staff. Logically, staff and sandals would be necessities of a journey. The distinction amongst these three does not seem to have been picked up by Rainisoalambo.

68 Rasamoela, Ny Fampianarana 21.

**Miandry** means “to wait or to attend to.” A sheep herder is a *mpiandry ondry*; a cow herder is designated a *mpiandry omby*. The shortened form, simply *mpiandry*, has always been used and I believe the English translations misrepresent Rainisoalambo’s insight into the early church practice that he adopted. There are “sent ones” (*apostoly* or *iraka*) and “those who remain/attend to” (*mpiandry*). Thunem describes the distinction this way:


And in 1904 already had the number reached 50 of those instructed and set apart as Apostles or Messengers who went willingly to do the work of the *Fifohazana*. And besides these there were also those called: “*Mpiandry*.” They were the ones who received the work in the place where they were and accepted to be the caretakers of their friends.70

The emphasis then rests not on the metaphor of a shepherd and sheep but on those whose task it is not to wander but to remain and attend to those left behind. Not everyone is called to be an *iraka*. In the missionary strategy of the earliest church and in Rainisoalambo’s program there is attention to the role of the wandering charismatics/prophets and the communities begun by their ministries but carried on by those who “remain” (*miandry*). Rainisoalambo’s context, similar to that of first century Galilee, I believe gives him the clarity that those with more distant horizons to bridge might miss.

Escande, in the long quotation above, also notes that the *apostoly* he had heard were not profound in their theology. If what Escande was looking for was a systematized theology, then one would have to agree, there is no sense here of a unified system. On the other hand, Western Christian theology did not have a unified systematic theology of

70 Thunem, Rasamoela et al., *Ny Tantaran’ny Fifohazana* 25. My translation.
significance until Aquinas in the 13th century (or some might argue, Augustine in the 4th century), so it seems a bit ungenerous to a nascent Malagasy movement. What they do have, I would argue, are *loci communes* that center the preaching and teaching tasks around certain texts and themes. As an oral hermeneutic does not distinguish between the ordinate and subordinate but holds all on a single plane, then these themes can seem to be simplistic and the theological position becomes unsophisticated. More likely, in the minds of those like Rainisoalambo, these themes, like the Scriptures, remain open to use as needed, remaining within reach of the preacher’s memory as needed. These memorized *loci* become the foundation upon which sermons will be built. The themes worked out by Rainisoalambo were listed above: repentance, love, humility, endurance, prayer, faith, holiness, hope, judgment and holy unity. They not only pick up biblical themes but are also directly related to the context out of which they emerge. I here will be drawing on Rasamoela’s articulation of the texts as it appears in his work.71

Rasamoela lists the themes and then gives the texts that correspond with those themes as primary texts. There are some other texts thrown in as explanatory, but the primary texts head each section. So in Rasamoela’s enumeration, which purports to follow Rainisoalambo’s, we begin with Repentance. The primary text is Matthew 4:17: “From that time Jesus began to proclaim, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.’”

Rasamoela explains,

* Ny mibe baka dia ny mahafo ny ratsy izay tsy ny hiraiketana = ny ody, ny sikidy, ny resadresa-poana, ny lainga, ny fiondrantena ratsy ary ny zavatra tsy mety rehetra.*

To repent is to leave behind all evil that should not be retained = talismans, divination
by lots, idle conversation, lies, bad comportment and everything that is not fitting.⁷²

Repentance, with this definition, primarily means a break with traditional Malagasy modes of
healing and access to supernatural information – ody and sikidy. While comportment and
personal behavior are of interest they are not primary in the enumeration and I believe that is
significant. The Disciples of the Lord have placed enormous emphasis upon the results of
preaching, the results of the laying-on of hands for healing and exorcism. Rainisoalambo,
while still an ombiasa as noted above, was an adept at “making the ody sweet” (mankamany
ody), that is, making them effective. Radikobo Ntsimane, a PhD candidate at UKZN
Pietermaritzburg has helped me to understand that in traditional African medicine, it is not
the medicine that is powerful by itself rather it gains its power from the action of the
traditional healer.⁷³ In this case it is not the ody that are effective but the Word of God and
the laying on of hands. There is a reversal here of from whence the healing power comes.
The healer now is empowered by the book, in a sense, the new ody. The one hoping to be
Christian can only find effective cure when he or she makes a complete break with the
healing strategy of Malagasy culture and embraces this new strategy. This new strategy,
however, is not at odds with the Malagasy cultural logic underlying the concepts of illness
and their treatment, even if they might be for the Western Christians who carried the Gospel
to Madagascar in the 19th century or for Western thought in the 21st century. Cause and
effect find their place in different categories for the Westerner and for the Malagasy.

Healing, for Malagasy, has a larger connotation than simply the end of a deleterious bodily


⁷³ Radikobo Ntsimane, Ph.D. Seminar, University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, School of Religion and Theology, May 30, 2007.
effect. The Matthew text cited follows directly on the Isaiah quote about a land of deep darkness that was the Galilee. So it is here, too, that the “land of deep darkness” (tany maizina) hears the call to repent. Tany maizina is the common expression used amongst Malagasy Christians to describe an area where there are few, if any, Christians. This radical break with the person’s previous religious system is emphasized by Rasamoela,

Tokony ho fantatra mazava fa ny fibebahana tanteraka no mahavonjy, fa tsy tapatapany foana.

It should be clearly understood that it is complete repentance that saves, but not a portion only.74

Later, in the same paragraph, he notes that it is not simply thinking about repenting that saves the Prodigal Son but the fact that he actually returns to his father. This notion of action will continue throughout these themes and fits an oral understanding which bases itself less on reflection concerning a state of being and more on the inherent life conflicts and subsequent acts. Note, too, that the action is relational. The son returns to the father and relationship is restored.75

Humility is the second theme. The text cited is Matthew 18:4: “Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” Here again humility is seen

74 Rasamoela, Ny Fampianarana 14.

75 Missionaries often note that Malagasy do not seem to repent or apologize in ways expected by western culture. Pastor Zaihita, PhD candidate at UKZN Pietermaritzburg and a former colleague of mine on the faculty of the Regional Lutheran Theological Seminary at Bezaha, explained to me that there is a difference between mibebaka (repent) and mivalo (also to repent). In the former, the person in the wrong comes to the wronged and asks forgiveness. This is not, he claims, a normal procedure in Malagasy society. In the latter, the wrongdoer flees for protection to another who later comes to the wronged to return the wrongdoer home – as in the case of a naughty child like the Prodigal Son. The wrongdoer never explicitly states their fault and, because the wronged does not wish to break fihavanana (relationship) with the one escorting the wrongdoer, the matter is dropped, never to be discussed again. Mivalo, Pastor Zaihita suggests, is the more common experience of Malagasy. (Personal conversation, 5/30/2007).
as an active force rather than as an entity or state. It is primarily something you do, not something you are.

*Ny fanetrentena, hoy Rainisoalambo, dia tsy vitan'ny hoe: ao ankevitra ihany; fa tsy maintsy miseho amin'ny fomba amin-toetra koa izany, toy ny amin'ny fiteny, amin'ny fijery, amin'ny fandeha, ary amin'ny fomba fitafy.*

Humility, says Rainisoalambo, is not accomplished by what is called ‘by thought alone,’ but it must show in the ways and character also, as in speech, outlook, going, and in the mode of dress.76

So the Disciple of the Lord intentionally places him- or herself in the position of the child vis-à-vis the other by comportment, by the manner of speech,77 how you carry yourself when you walk and what clothing you wear. In Malagasy society, children are important but clearly hold a lesser place when compared to their elders. Each generation or age group looks to their elders for protection and gives respect to their elders, culminating in the respect given and due to the ancestors. That a person would willingly take the lower position to someone who should be his or her junior would be a major reversal of protocol.

Without fleshing out each of the themes, though we shall return to these themes later, it is the character of all the themes which should be noted: they are pietistic, non-assertive, individual and focus more on personal character and relations than on social action. There is no implied social ethic for the transformation of the society.

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77 It is not clear from my reading if he was responsible for the change, however, Rainisoalambo insisted upon terms of respect being added to the greetings. This is current practice on the part of most Malagasy so it would be hard to trace. According to Rasamoela, Rainisoalambo taught that: *Ny teny fiarahabana sy fanaovam-beloma fanaon'ny Betsileo hoe: ‘Akory’ sy ‘Veloma’ ampiana ny fanajana hoe: ‘Tompoko o’* (Aoka *(sic!)* tompoko o! – Veloma, tompoko o!). (The words of greeting and parting used by the Betsileo, that is “How are you?” and “Good-bye” should have added respect [-ful words], “O Sir/Madam” (“Stop that, sir/madam!” [that should read Akory, How are you…] and “Good-bye, O sir/madam”). Rasamoela, *Ny Fampianarana* 21.
Bryan Wilson, in his work *Magic and the Millennium*, describes eight different “responses to the world” which characterize a more or less organized attempt by human beings to seek salvation from the problem of evil and suffering:

Everywhere there is a problem of evil, and everywhere men are disposed to seek salvation from it. The scale of soteriological promise is clearly related to the scale on which evil is depicted, from the local incidence of illness to the destiny of all mankind. It is thus evident that salvation may range from limited demand for *ad hoc* instant therapy to a programme for the reorganization of the world.\(^78\)

Wilson describes the seven responses that are counter-cultural and that reject prevailing soteriological theories in the following way:

*Conversionist:* The world in this response is seen as corrupt because of the agency of human beings who are corrupt. If humans can undergo a deep, emotional transformation, hence a “conversion”, then the human is saved now inspite of the evil which surrounds him or her.

*Revolutionist:* In this response the world is so evil that the only hope is for a complete overthrow of the natural order and, even more importantly, of the social order. This overthrow may be something humans participate in but is more likely effected by divine intervention. Soteriologically, one lives in this evil age with hope for the world to come.

*Introversionist:* Similarly to the revolutionist response, the world is seen as irreversibly evil and so the only hope for humans is to withdraw from the world and to purify themselves. They form “pure communities” that await the end of the present order and so provide hope in the present.

*Manipulationist:* This response tends not to see the world so much in need of transformation as for human beings to change the means and techniques by which happiness might be attained. Here salvation is not unattainable in this world, rather it is open to those who are willing to change the means and structures used to attain it.

*Thaumaturgical:* Salvation is not seen on a grand scale in this response. It is not salvation from an evil world so much as it is salvation from evil situations and personal problems. The person here seeks relief from illness, loss, calamity or even anxieties about unforeseen future problems. Because the response is more localized, it does not lend itself well to a generalized ideology or doctrine. As a result of this miracles and oracles form the core in the individuals quest for salvation.

Reformist: This response focuses on supernatural insight for the re-ordering of society. As human beings are inspired by the other-worldly, so they can remake the world in a form that will lead to universal peace and security. This response sees a more gradual change occurring through the agency of human beings inspired by the divine.

Utopian: Similar to the reformist response, the utopian view understands that a new social order is needed. It is different from the introversionist response in that it requires that human beings remake the world as a place free from evil.\textsuperscript{79}

Wilson’s categories are a helpful lens for viewing Rainisoalambo’s movement and those that followed. The clearest correlation to the \textit{Fifohazana} is with the thaumaturgical response. Certain key indicators from the movement would lead to this conclusion. First, of course, is the heavy emphasis upon healing and exorcism as the necessary part of the message. Rainisoalambo received his healing in a dream miraculously and went on to gather around him those who had similar experience. He then, as noted above, emphasized the healings and exorcism as the necessary part of the message, indeed the proof that the general message of salvation was valid. Second, while the movement did set apart a village for their healing center and retreat compound, it was never viewed as an escape from a collapsing or evil world. Indeed, the \textit{Fifohazana} remained engaged in the world. There is no introversionist or utopian tendency. The movement avoided the censure of the French colonial government by staying under their radar through their close connection with the missions, if not always with the church. And finally, in line with the thematic sermons that Rainisoalambo developed for his \textit{apostoly}, there is no attempt here to be intentionally systematic in the formulation of theology or dogma. The material is rather intentionally set according to orality’s logic of co-ordination rather than subordination.

\textsuperscript{79} Wilson, \textit{Magic and the Millennium} 18-26.
One additional piece that gives support to my contention is Escande’s early concern for the movement’s practice of exorcism and healing in the congregations of his first charge. He carefully brokered an agreement with the apostoly Ramarijaona that these services would not be held in the church because he was afraid the French authorities would associate the practice with witchcraft. This initially baffled me as one could clearly make a distinction between a healing art and the practice of malevolent magic. Wilson demonstrates that the thaumaturgical movements in Africa often had connections with witch-finding and the removal of those suspected of sorcery by the community. Vigilante justice is generally anathema to western government. Escande’s fears may have been well founded.

It is not the goal here to provide an over-arching history of the Fifohazana movement as represented in Soatanana. Rather, I have attempted to set up the discussion in hopes of moving to a theological description of homiletics from a Malagasy viewpoint. For that reason, I am not going to describe here the ensuing years from 1907 to the present, though the history of Soatanana is rich and interesting. Of some interest is the fact that the movement split in 1954 with the larger contingent of members opting to become an independent church organization and the smaller contingent remaining related to the Malagasy Lutheran Church. The main issue in the split, not surprisingly given the tenor of the times (Madagascar was headed then towards independence from France in 1960 and the missions had already granted the Malagasy Lutheran Church independent status in 1950), was over missionary involvement both as treasurer of the association and as president of the governing committee. This arrangement had been necessitated originally by the need to keep the movement within the confines of a mission approved by the colonial government. At the

80 Wilson, Magic and the Millennium 75-82.
time of the 1904 organizational meeting the French colonial government was extremely suspicious of any indigenous movements and meetings. The only way to receive official permission for such organizations to meet, limited though it was, was to be under the auspices of a recognized foreign mission. By the 1950’s this need was no longer present. On September 17th, 2004 I had a conversation with each of the raiamandreny (ruling elders) of the two parts of the movement. The occasion for the visit was 100th anniversary of the movement’s organization and I was the mission representative for the American church (ELCA). While doing research in the archives of the NMS in Stavanger, Norway, I had come across a heretofore-unidentified photograph of Rainisoalambo.

Figure 2: Outside the home of the raiamandreny of the independent Soatanana movement with photograph of Rainisoalambo for presentation. Pictured are members of the independent movement, Razaka Oliva (one of the authors cited, with beard) and the author. Photo by Faith Rohrbough, September 17, 2004.
The photograph was enlarged by the NMS, and I presented a copy each to the two elders. I also wondered aloud with each of them as to whether or not there was a possibility of reconciliation between the two groups. Dada Josoa, the elder of the church-related movement told me that he was certainly willing and had made overtures but that the level of education for mpiandry and iraka in the independent movement was quite low, “They even say things like, ‘the Gospel according to Jeremiah!’ ” repeating a charge from the time of the division made by the missionary that the independents were poorly educated.81 Dada Ravita Petera, on the other hand noted to me that it was God’s intention that the movement become independent and so there was no need to reconcile. Both men were very warm and pleasant. Dada Josoa’s critique, when viewed from the point of view of orality, however strengthens my argument above regarding the availability of the text to address the context, all parts of which are equally available.82 It is the oral hermeneutic.

One last note on an interview I had with Mama Razafindramanana Ramarcelline, an iraka of the church-related movement working in Antananarivo. I asked Mama Ramarcelline what, if anything, was Rainisoalambo’s special gift in preaching that helped him convince so many people to become Christian. Her response was quite illuminating and demonstrates that the movement’s power and relevance has not been diminished in the time intervening since Rainisoalambo’s death nor has its implicit theological understanding of the power of

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81 It would be worth comparing the sermons of the mpiandry and iraka from the two branches of the Soatanana movement to see if there is a significant difference in their preaching: more oral, more literate, effectiveness with congregations, etc.

82 It should be noted that Dada Josoa, before his election as raiaman-dreny, was a retired pastor in the Malagasy Lutheran Church and had even been the president of the Afovoany Synod during the latter part of his working career. He took his theological training at the Lutheran Seminary at Ivory, Fianarantsoa.
the Word changed. She recounted again much of the history that is found above. And then she adds:

*Ka ny zavatra nataon'i Dada Rainisoalambo voalohany dia nitrondra ny Betsileo izy izany dia efitra anankiray ohatran 'izao ihany no tranon-dry zareo dia io efitra iray io dia mikambana ao ny akoho dia ao koa ny fanaovana lakozia fanaovana afo. Dia efitra ohatran 'izay izany no tena nahazoany olona be dia be, ao ny akoho, ao ny lakozia fanovana afo ao ny fatoriana ao no fihanan-kanina; dia na olona folo aza izao ka iray trano ka manana efitra sahala amin'ity dia ao daholo ry zareo no miara matory. Rehefa nifoha izany i Dada Rainisoalambo dia izay no tena nentiny nity ny filazantsara... dia nasainy nodiovina ny trano hoe atao trano fivavahana dia diovina atao magio tsara, dia nampianariny nanao lakozia, nampianariny natokana ny akoho, ny biby tsy miara-matory amin'ny olona, nampianariny nanao trano efitra maromaro betsabetsaka dia misy efitra misaraka amin'izay; dia hitan'ny olona izany fa tsara, hitan'ny olona izany fa tsara ilay zavatra, dia hoe zavatra nahazoana ohatran 'izao fahalalana tsara rehetra rehetra, vavaka no nanesorana ny akoho, vavaka no nanaovana ny lakozia, vavaka no nanadivovana ny trano dia ohatran 'izay izany no tena nahatonga ny olona betsaka ho eo amin'ny Dada Rainisoalambo.*

So the thing that Dada Rainisoalambo did first was that he led the Betsileo for they were living in one room which was much the size of this room [translator’s note: small office where we interviewed] as their houses were and in that one room were all together the chickens, also the kitchen and the cooking fire; (in this same room). There is where they slept, there they ate; even as many as ten people in a house with a room this size, there they all slept. When Dada Rainisoalambo awoke that is the means he used to really preach the gospel...he ordered them to clean the house, that is make their house a house of prayer, cleaned really well, and he taught them how to make a kitchen (outdoors), and taught them to keep the chickens apart and not to let the people sleep with the animals, he taught them to make many rooms and even free-standing rooms (from the main house); and the people saw it was good; the people saw that this thing was very good, this was the thing that was used to succeed like this good knowledge everything, everything. It was prayer which was used to remove the chickens, it was prayer by which the kitchens were made, it was prayer by which the houses were cleaned and it was with things like this that many people came to Dada Rainisoalambo.83

It was not simply that Rainisoalambo taught people good hygiene and home construction techniques. An oral hermeneutic would take on a rather concrete and practical set of

concerns. Here that oral hermeneutic is informed by the power of the Word that is a power independent and effective. Rainisoalambo accomplished his task by the power of the Word in prayer. The salvation envisioned here is not in the future as in life after death or the transformation of the world, it is in the real and practical need of people to overcome the adversities that beset them presently. That message is on-going.

Other Revival Leaders

The Fifohazana has had several charismatic leaders over its more than 100 year history. Each is represented by a toibilehibe or “large encampment/center” that serves as the headquarters for the particular movement. There are four main toibilehibe which have kept official ties to two of the mainline Protestant churches, the Malagasy Lutheran Church (FLM) and the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM) which is a union church comprising a mostly Reformed theological tradition. While all four movements stress their ecumenical nature and their willingness to work with anyone from any church tradition, three of the four toibilehibe also serve as Lutheran parishes or are under primarily Lutheran control while one is primarily under FJKM control. These ties represent the toibilehibe’s historic foundations more than matters of institutional pride or theological conviction. Today the four have some common governing rules and both of the two churches have a department within their national church structures that oversees and assists the work of the Fifohazana. The differences among the four movements center more on history and custom than on any significant disagreement over the nature of the awakening or its purpose.

The second strong leader to emerge was Ravelonjanahary in 1900. Ravelonjanahary’s movement stressed somewhat more than Rainisoalambo’s the miraculous healings. Its headquarters is still located in Manolotrony in the Betsileo region and this is the primarily
FJKM tobolehibe. Renilahy was her given name that was changed to Ravelonjanahary (literally, Ms. “Made-alive-by-God”) after her resuscitation\textsuperscript{84} six days after death shortly following her call. The daughter of a powerful ombiasa, she was reported to be sixty years of age at the time of her call in 1900 and died in 1970 at the age of 150 (\textit{sic}).\textsuperscript{85} During the week of her first death she was instructed in heaven and was later taught to read by more miraculous means. The hagiographic account provided by Rabehatonina\textsuperscript{86} is sketchy on this and having no other adequate sources, I have decided not to expand on her movement’s understanding of the preaching task. Moreover, as noted above, Ravelonjanahary’s movement is primarily attached to the Reformed tradition and so to delimit the project we will not pursue her further. The two reasons to mention her here are (1) the fact that she is a strong, early female leader and the daughter of a powerful ombiasa and (2) her miraculous instruction in reading and writing – if that is what Rabehatonina is trying to suggest.

Ravelonjanahary attracted to her ministry another important revival leader, Baba Rajaofera. He was known as a healer as well and as a gifted musician and songwriter. The two worked together for a while and he founded a toby at Vatotsara near Antsirabe though it never had the following to become a tobolehibe in its own right. Unlike the other revival leaders mentioned so far, he was the child of a Lutheran pastor and had a brother in the ministry and thus was instructed from an early age in the Christian faith. His educational

\textsuperscript{84} While the hagiographic accounts refer to Ravelonjanahary’s \textit{fitsanganana tamin’ny maty} (resurrection), I have chosen the more neutral term of ‘resuscitation’ in order to maintain an objective stance.

\textsuperscript{85} Rabehatonina, \textit{Tantaran’ny Fifohazana eto Madagasikara: 1894-1990} 59. Retired missionary Oliver Carlson told me that although he had not met her he had heard from Malagasy that she was told by God (Jesus) that since his life had been cut short he would add to her normal life span 33 years. At the time Rev. Carlson heard this she was 126 years old and died 4 or 5 years later. (Interview 11/12/2004, Isoraka).

\textsuperscript{86} Rabehatonina, \textit{Tantaran’ny Fifohazana eto Madagasikara: 1894-1990} 45-63.
level would have been fairly high. The Norwegian missionary, Arthur Snekkenes wrote a report for the Seventh Intermissionary Conference in 1953. In the report he discussed Rajaofera’s particularly effective preaching with some interesting commentary:

Nohamarinin 'ny Tompo tamin 'ny famantarana ny toriteny izay niantsoan 'ny Tompo azy, ka nositrany ny marary, ary nalolotra ny odiny ny mpanana ody. Isan'ny zavatra nahagaga sady nanaitra ny olona dia ny fahaizany nilaza ny toerana nanafenana ny ody.

The Lord verified with signs the sermons for which the Lord called him, and so he healed the sick, and those who had ody (talismans) offered them. Among the things that astounded and surprised the people was his ability to say where the ody were hidden. 87

The information available on him is also sketchy and so we will not dwell on him or his work. He began his work in 1927 (1928 according to Snekkenes) and died in 1936. 88 Rajaofera will be mentioned briefly again in connection with Volahavana Germaine. 89

Like Baba Rajaofera, Pastor Rakotozandry Daniel (1919-1947) was a relatively well-educated leader of the Fifohazana. His tobolehibe was synonymous with his one and only pastoral call, Farihimena. A sickly child, Pastor Rakotozandry was a small and frail man whose education was often interrupted for health reasons. His awakening as a prophet (mpaminany) was as a child where he had visions (tsindrimandry) in his dreams. Specifically, he saw Jesus in his vision offering him health. Rakotozandry spent some time as a teacher before entering seminary. During that time, people were impressed by his prophecy and he was convinced finally to study for the ministry. At one point in his ministry, he was believed to have had an Elijah-like contest with an ombiasa whom his sister

89 For a biography of Rajaofera see Fridtjov Birkeli, Sønner av Solskinnssaya:10 gassikse profiler (Nomi Forlag, Bergen: 1967) 130-152.
had consulted with her sick child. Rakotozandry ran off after his sister wrested the child from the ombiasa and carried the child home. The child died on the way and the ombiasa did his best to win back the confidence of the people, but to no avail. At that point Rakotozandry called upon God not to let this chance at showing his glory pass and with that the child was restored to life. Rakotozandry did not spend long at Farihimena. Ordained on July 6, 1946, he died on November 13, 1947.

**Volahavana Germaine (Nenilava)**

When Volahavana Germaine (Nenilava) began her ministry outside of her native region of Manakara, it was in Antsirabe, the capital of the Vakinakaratra region, probably in 1949 though the information is not clear. According to her principal biographer, Pastor Zakaria Tsivoery, one Thursday evening during this visit three of the above leaders of the Fifohazana appeared to her while she was in church leading a service. The church was full and Nenilava’s assistant, Mrs. Razanamalala, was making her way to the front when, unbeknownst to her, she bumped shoulders with Pastor Rakotozandry. Nenilava alone could see the three men and what was happening and reported it to the congregation. She described Rainisoalambo as he is often seen in a famous photograph, wearing his hat, long pants and white clothing. Pastor Rakotozandry Daniel and Rajaofera both are seen wearing pastoral robes, but Rajaofera carried a trumpet and Rakotozandry carried the book in which is written the names of every person. Both Rajaofera and Rakotozandry speak to Nenilava and,


91 For more on Pastor Rakotozandry Daniel, see Rabehatonina, Tantaran’ny Fifohazana eto Madagasikara: 1894-1990  88-93, Thunem, Rasamoela et al., Ny Tantaran’ny Fifohazana  99-175.

92 Thunem, Rasamoela et al., Ny Tantaran’ny Fifohazana  200.

93 See Figure 1, p. 46.
essentially, commission her. They tell her they have come to “strengthen [her] …because the

work will be hard with which [she] has been entrusted.”

Nenilava reported this all to the crowd, many of whom cried with joy and many others repented. So began her national ministry.

By the time of her death in 1998, Volahavana Germaine was the most famous and influential church leader on the island.

In the year 1920, Volahavana was born to Malandy and Baonilava in the village of Mandrondra and district of Manakara. Malandy was a well-known and powerful ombiasa

94 In recent years, since the death of Volahavana Germaine, a new leader has emerged in the Bara village of Maropaika. Her name is Rabea Harilala Christine. She, too, has a vision but in hers not only does Jesus speak to her, he introduces her to the new “receptionist” in heaven, Mother Volahavana Germaine. [Many and Jean Seraphim Raïlaimavo Rasolondratovo, Ny Fifohazam-Panahy Notarihin’i Mama RABEA Harilala Christine, Maropaika Ivohibe (Self-published photocopy, 2000).] It is of note that these movements feel a spiritual connectedness represented by the appearance of deceased leaders in the authorizing visions.

95 Thunem, Rasamoela et al., Ny Tantaran’ny Fifohazana 220-21.


Figure 3: Volahavana Germaine (Nenilava) This is a picture of Nenilava in the notebook of her visits abroad entitled Rakitsoratra Notsongaina by Rasanimiady. See Dictionary of African Christian Biography, http://www.dacb.org/stories/madagascar/nenilava.html.
and *mpanjaka* (king) who was often consulted by the local people. He was respected as a *mpikabary* (orator)\(^7\) which is significant in that Volahavana would have been immersed in the rhetoric and cadences of her father’s art. According to Tsivoery and Rabehatonina, Volahavana often watched her father as he practiced *sikidy* (divination by lots) but she had no love for the practice and was even insolent with her father, questioning the efficacy of his art in front of his clients.\(^8\) At the age of 10, Volahavana began having dreams. In her dreams, a tall, large, white man carries her to a stone building, washes her feet in a basin, and rocks her to sleep. In another she is caught up to heaven in a net. The voice of Jesus, although she does not know his name, began to come to her and she was able to tell people things about themselves or about their conversations which Jesus had told her privately. This astounded people but still she had not heard a Christian message that might allow her to decode what was happening to her. The biographies indicate that there were periods of calm and other periods of active dreams. Her father, using the *sikidy*, discovered that the reason she rejected all marriage proposals, once of marriageable age, was that she was dedicated to a *Fanahy lehibe ambony* (“Great Spirit from above”). He stopped pressuring her for a while. Finally, in 1936, at the age of 16 she was married off to a Lutheran catechist, Mosesy Tsirefo, a 61-year-old widower with many children,\(^9\) after a catechumenate of six months.

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\(^7\) Lehiékà Joseph, as cited in Pitaka, “Ny Fampianaran’i Mama Volahavana Germaine,” 7.

\(^8\) Thunem, Rasamoela et al., *Ny Tantaran’ny Fifohazana* 181.

and baptism. Her training was continued in her husband’s village of Ankaramalaza, the site that would later become her toibilehibe. At the time of her baptism she adopted the “Christian name” Germaine. Volahavana Germaine was a big woman and during her early years as an evangelist, some in the crowds began to taunt her, calling her Nenilava (Tall-mother). She liked the name and it stuck.

Volahavana Germaine’s visions in which she was instructed for the preaching and healing task ahead of her give us wonderful insight into her “oral” theology. Nenilava never learned to read and write in the conventional sense. Oliver Carlson was a missionary in Tsiombe in the south of the island in the 1960’s. He had written to her several times inviting her to come and preach in the district for which he was responsible but his letters never got a response. Finally, he was told, “Ty mahay taratasy izy,” that is, “She can neither read nor write” (literally: “she is not capable of paper.”). Pitaka, Tsivoery and Rabehatonina all note her protestations to Jesus that she could not do the work to which she was called because she knew herself to be uneducated. There is some feeling that she might have had

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100 It should be noted that the biographies cited are not critical works but rather hagiographies of a beloved “saint.” Often there is discrepancy in the details. Tsivoery has her married in 1935 at age 16 (Thunem, Rasamoela et al., Ny Tantaran’ny Fifohazana 186.), while Pitaka claims she was 18 and married in 1936 (see above). Since Pitaka states she was born in 1920, his own calculation of her age is off. Exact history does not concern me here as much as the theological understandings of Volahavana Germaine and her followers.

101 Pitaka claims that the village was possessed by a devil and so his father-in-law gave it over to Mosesy Tsirefo because he was a man effective in prayer, indeed given the nickname “Mr. Prayer.” Pitaka, “Ny Fampianaran’i Mama Volahavana Germaine,” 19.

102 Thunem, Rasamoela et al., Ny Tantaran’ny Fifohazana 186.

103 The Rev. Oliver and Gene Carlson. Retired missionaries. Interview conducted at Isoraka, Antananarivó, November 12, 2004

a very rudimentary understanding of letters, though most of the evidence points away from it. This fact and the nature of her visions make a very striking claim.

At the age of 12, Nenilava had a dream that Jesus brought her to a large church and sat her in the front in a chair. There was a crowd of people in the church and at one point Jesus escorted Nenilava to the pulpit and preached to the people with Nenilava standing next to him. No one was allowed to sit in the chair she vacated and a white cloth was left there to signify her occupation of the chair. When Jesus had finished his sermon, he turned to Nenilava and told her that she would preach like this. Then he escorted her back to her chair, there was a final hymn and with that she awoke. The symbolism is clear and direct. Volahavana Germaine would be the voice of Jesus; her chair – that is her authority to teach – could not be taken by another. This is made even more strikingly clear in a subsequent vision where she and her two friends are taken to heaven and given a paper laissez-passer for the seven heavenly gates through which they would have to pass to come to heaven. Once in heaven, they are well installed in the rooms prepared for them and told to write the number of their room on the laissez-passer so they can find the room when the come back for permanent residence. Then they are shown the chairs of the disciples, including the chair of


106 Volahavana Germaine was not the first evangelist of note who was illiterate in the conventional sense. Rainitsiandavana, a former guardian of the sampy (idol/talisman) Zanaharitsimandry, converted to Christianity after the deaths of his wife and sons. In 1832 he started a controversial mission to the illiterate claiming a universal reign of peace and prosperity…and the worldwide dominance for the Merina monarch. His life was cut short, however, when, before the Queen Ranavalona I, he proclaimed that all people are descended from Adam and Eve, including the Queen herself and the people of Mozambique (who made up the slave caste). See Françoise Raison-Jourde, Bible et pouvoir à Madagascar au XIXe siècle: Invention d’une identité chrétienne et construction de l’État (1780-1880) (Paris: Editions Karthala, 1991) 133-35.

107 Thunem, Rasamoela et al., Ny Tantaran’ny Fifohazana 185.
Judas that is unoccupied and will remain so as a warning to others\textsuperscript{108} and perhaps also to Volahavana: her chair can be permanently vacated, too.

Jesus is not an easy master in the visions recorded by her biographers. When she is reluctant to leave heaven in the vision cited above, he shows her the fires of hell;\textsuperscript{109} when she refuses to stop speaking to an individual who does not accept her spiritual gifts even after Jesus has commanded her to stop speaking, Jesus says to her “\textit{Hay, hianao maditra, ka tsy mety manaiy ny teny lazaina aminao?”} (“Hey, are you naughty and therefore not able to accept the word spoken to you?”). With that he hits her and she faints, remaining unconscious for half an hour.\textsuperscript{110} When Nenilava failed to convince a congregation to come to a service of repentance and reconciliation with their pastor, Jesus hits her and she is unconscious for two hours.\textsuperscript{111}

Not an easy master, Jesus proves to be a thorough teacher for Volahavana. For three months Jesus taught her \textit{teny tsy fantatra} [tongues or \textit{glossalalia}].\textsuperscript{112} It is in tongues that Jesus will speak to her for the remainder of her ministry and it is with the use of tongues that Jesus teaches her Holy Scripture. The most striking image of all, however, is the equipment that Jesus uses for her instruction. Tsivoery describes it thus:

\textit{Nisy tabilao fotsy, izay nahantona tao an-tranony ho fampianarana azy. Tamin ’io tabilao fotsy io no nanoratan’i Jesosy ny teny izay nampianarina azy. Fotsy koa ny soratra izay nosoratana tamin ’io tabilao io. Tsy mba soratra mitsilavana tahaka ny}

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\textit{Thunem, Rasamoela et al., Ny Tantaran’ny Fifohazana 187-88.}
\textit{Thunem, Rasamoela et al., Ny Tantaran’ny Fifohazana 187-88.}
\textit{Thunem, Rasamoela et al., Ny Tantaran’ny Fifohazana 200-01.}
\textit{Thunem, Rasamoela et al., Ny Tantaran’ny Fifohazana 223-24.}
\end{flushright}

\textit{This does not constitute \textit{glossalalia} in the traditional sense of an unknown heavenly language. Volahavana, according to Tsivoery, uses a mixture of 12 known human languages, a phrase at a time.}
There was a white chalkboard which was hung in the house for her instruction. It was on that white chalkboard that Jesus wrote the words taught her. The writing was also white which was written on the board. It was not with crosswise writing like ours but descending writing like the Chinese with which Jesus wrote there on the board.113

When it was not on this white chalkboard then Jesus used a book with very white and very thin pages. If Nenilava kneeled and hunched over the book she could barely read the white letters printed there.114 White letters on a white board or on a white page, running up and down rather than left and right all for the teaching of an unknown spoken language with which Jesus would communicate to Nenilava for the remainder of her ministry through speech! Education, in this vision, is set back to its original oral roots: a disciple learns from the spoken words of the master. The book and the chalkboard, chalk and lines of print are effaced and the spoken word stands alone. In Volahavana Germaine’s person, if not her ministry, the original high place of the spoken word for communication and to effect power in the world is restored to primacy.

Any academic theorist of cultural anthropology will recognize in this description the classic marks of shamanism as defined and developed by Mircea Eliade in his work, *Shamanism*115 and Claude Lévi-Strauss in *Structural Anthropology*.116 Lévi-Strauss describes a three-fold fabulation experience that roughly mirrors the ‘divine education’ of

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113 Thunem, Rasamoela et al., *Ny Tantaran’ny Fifohazana* 193-94. My translation.
114 Thunem, Rasamoela et al., *Ny Tantaran’ny Fifohazana* 194.
Nenilava recounted above. In describing the “shamanistic complex,” especially as it relates to the case of sorcerers he was studying, three factors are put forth. He writes:

This fabulation of a reality unknown in itself – a fabulation consisting of procedures and representations – is founded on a threefold experience: first, that of the shaman himself, who, if his calling is a true one (and even if it is not, simply by virtue of his practicing it), undergoes specific states of a psychosomatic nature; second, that of the sick person, who may or may not experience an improvement of his condition; and, finally, that of the public, who also participate in the cure, experiencing an enthusiasm and an intellectual and emotional satisfaction which produce collective support, which in turn inaugurates a new cycle.\textsuperscript{117}

Lévi-Strauss goes on to state that there is no reason to doubt that the shaman does not fully believe they have experienced these states and that the hardships they endure may well help produce the psychological state necessary to induce them psychologically.\textsuperscript{118} It is not simply the shaman’s experience, however, that is operative. It is also the reception by the community of the recounting of that experience as having some normative value to the community.\textsuperscript{119}

Whether consciously or unconsciously, Nenilava’s visions are a commentary on the times and pressures under which she lived. In 1941 when her ministry began in earnest with the exorcism of a demon possessing her stepchild,\textsuperscript{120} Madagascar was feeling the pressures of French colonial rule with France itself at war. Madagascar’s colonial administration had initially declared for Free France in 1940 but when ordered to resign by the Vichy government, Governor-General Marcel de Coppet did not put up any resistance.\textsuperscript{121} The

\textsuperscript{117} Lévi-Strauss, \textit{Structural Anthropology} 179.
\textsuperscript{118} Lévi-Strauss, \textit{Structural Anthropology} 179.
\textsuperscript{119} Eliade, \textit{Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy} 504.
\textsuperscript{120} Thunem, Rasamoela et al., \textit{Ny Tantaran’ny Fifohazana} 189-90.
British bombing of the French fleet at Mers el Kebir had left a significant effect on public opinion. The Allies, fearing a Japanese attempt to secure the island for an Axis base, blockaded Madagascar until a British expeditionary force was able to wrest control from the Vichy government. Madagascar thus suffered the deprivation of imported goods and pressures similar to other parts of the French colonial empire to supply troops to the war effort (by June 1940 there were 34,000 Malagasy troops in France and another 72,000 ready to deploy). Because Madagascar was self-sufficient in food, the deprivations were not as harsh as they could have been but it was not an easy time. Up until the war, Malagasy were beginning to feel more optimistic about political change and even some hopes for a restoration of their national independence were evident. Under the Merina Monarchy forced labor was a norm and quite hated by subjugated populations. When Gallieni took over the administration in 1896, he realized that one could not free slaves in a subsistence economy and still supply a reasonable labor force to government works projects or to the settlers’ enterprises. Moving from a subsistence economy to a market economy would require a massive effort. He therefore retained the forced labor policies that the Malagasy continued to resent. In 1926, one of his successors, Marcel Olivier, set up the Service de la Main d’Œuvre pour les Travaux d’Intérêt Général (SMOTIG) (Labour Service for Work in the General Interest). This allowed for a conscripted labor force to work for 48-hour work weeks for pay during a period initially of three years with leave and later for two years without leave. The workers lived with their families in camps as though they were soldiers. At

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123 Heseltine, *Madagascar* 162.
times there were 12,000 workers conscripted.\textsuperscript{124} Although the SMOTIG was officially abolished in 1935,\textsuperscript{125} it continued in one form or another until its final abolition in 1946. The Manakara district where Nenilava lived was one that was particularly affected by the forced labor laws, as there were a significant number of settlers needing cheap labor for their plantations. The Malagasy of this region, being subsistence farmers who had little truck with landownership but rather cut out patches of forest for rice cultivation, had little use or understanding of the type of economic system the French colonial administration wished to impose. Feelings ran very high. In 1947 when the MDRM\textsuperscript{126} party’s drive for political independence for Madagascar resulted in violent outbreaks around the island, the Manakara region was one of the hotbeds.\textsuperscript{127} Not only was labor forced, but also the economy had taken a major downturn. The price of essentials had increased five hundred percent while salaries had increased only one hundred percent.\textsuperscript{128} To stabilize the price of essential food stuffs, the government instituted the \textit{Office du Riz} (Rice Bureau) in 1944 requiring farmers to sell their product at an artificially low price to the bureau and then selling it back to them at higher prices. A black market quickly sprang up and much ill will was generated.\textsuperscript{129} Finally, there was an outbreak of \textit{lagaly} (scabies) in the Manakara region that caused a fair amount of suffering.\textsuperscript{130}

\textsuperscript{125} Brown, \textit{Madagascar Rediscovered} 262.
\textsuperscript{126} \textit{Mouvement Démocratique de la Rénovation Malgache} (Democratic Movement for Malagasy Renovation).
\textsuperscript{127} Heseltine, \textit{Madagascar} 162-63.
\textsuperscript{128} Heseltine, \textit{Madagascar} 172.
\textsuperscript{129} Covell, \textit{Historical Dictionary of Madagascar} 159; Heseltine, \textit{Madagascar} 172.
\textsuperscript{130} Pitaka, “Ny Fampianaran’i Mama Volahavana Germaine,” 21.
Sometime in this early period Nenilava fasted. Her fast was not a total fast but rather a symbolic one. For three months after her struggle against the dragon (see below) she ate something like manna from heaven – food in the shape of communion wafers. For nine years she did not eat rice, the Malagasy staple.\textsuperscript{131} It would be interesting to speculate how much the economic conditions of the time and the actions of the hated Rice Bureau affected her thinking.\textsuperscript{132}

Nenilava’s first acquired “unknown” language was French, not surprisingly. Eventually she learned at least twelve of the main world languages, including English and Norwegian. When she spoke, according to Tsivoery, she used one phrase each from the twelve languages.\textsuperscript{133} It is these languages that she used to speak with Jesus.\textsuperscript{134} The imposition of French as the national language by the colonial administration was a strong component of their pacification and integration policies. For a people proud of their own language and oral art, this had never set well. So here Nenilava miraculously overcomes the French.\textsuperscript{135} The stories of Nenilava’s language learning are fascinating and the reader is referred to Tsivoery’s account for more detail.\textsuperscript{136} We need rather now to turn to her learning of Holy Scripture.

\textsuperscript{131} Thunem, Rasamoela et al., \textit{Ny Tantaran’ny Fifohazana} 199; Rabehatonina, \textit{Tantaran’ny Fifohazana eto Madagasikara: 1894-1990} 80.

\textsuperscript{132} See Appendix 7 for another appropriation of a cultural symbol.

\textsuperscript{133} Thunem, Rasamoela et al., \textit{Ny Tantaran’ny Fifohazana} 195.

\textsuperscript{134} Rabehatonina, \textit{Tantaran’ny Fifohazana eto Madagasikara: 1894-1990} 80.

\textsuperscript{135} In a chapter on the Fifohazana, Leoni Bouwer states, “The mere choice of a particular variety of language conveys a message of power or position, of submission or authority, of respect or familiarity, of insider or outsider adherence.” In Leoni Bouwer, “Reflections on the Relationship Between Language and Revival in Madagascar,” \textit{The Fifohazana}, Cynthia Holder Rich, Ed. (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2008), 198.

\textsuperscript{136} Thunem, Rasamoela et al., \textit{Ny Tantaran’ny Fifohazana} 177-265.
While Jesus came to her during her language acquisition period, Nenilava goes to Jesus through death for the learning of Scripture. She is told that she will die on Friday at 11 a.m. and so she calls the Christians in the local congregations to come and attend her, which they do. While in the midst of a wake-like service she slips off into death and enters heaven, where Jesus teaches her for three days. Again, it is the means that Jesus uses in her instruction that bears special attention:

The method of teaching her was as follows. There was one large, flat board (ruler) that must have been fifty centimeters long and fifteen centimeters wide. One of the things that had really bothered her was the distinguishing and knowing what is called chapter and verse in Holy Scripture because she was not very good at reading nor was she used to it. Jesus wrote on that ruler the chapter and verse that he was teaching her. After that Jesus explained to her the basic idea of that chapter and verse which he had written on the large, flat board (ruler).

Why a ruler? Is it the canon? Tsivoery goes on to say that Nenilava learned Scripture the way the disciples did on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:27-32), that is: directly from Jesus and from beginning to end. Jesus brings her to heaven seven times before her period of instruction is finished and thereafter, Jesus is continually in her ear whispering to her that which she should preach. Chapter and verse in an oral culture would be an oxymoron. It represents the height of a literate culture that a text is numbered and parsed for easier visual reference. For Nenilava the chapter and verse become more a shorthand for referencing.

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137 Thunem, Rasamoela et al., Ny Tantaran’ny Fifohazana 197. My translation.

138 Thunem, Rasamoela et al., Ny Tantaran’ny Fifohazana 197.
scripture so that she can be the giver of the Word rather than as a device aiding study. It later became Nenilava’s hallmark that she would give a supplicant a “portion of scripture” as a way of conferring Jesus’ message to that person. Oliver Carlson recounts the story of hearing Nenilava preach when another missionary, Carol Halvorson, was present. According to Carlson, Mrs. Halvorson was deeply troubled about some matter and as Nenilava was preaching her eyes rested on Mrs. Halvorson. “Nenilava came down the aisle and stopped opposite her and gave her a script that was just right on.”\textsuperscript{139} This story is repeated in other instances.\textsuperscript{140}

The healings Nenilava performed, the exorcisms, the hard work she engaged in for the sake of the Gospel fit a pattern of drama that well-fits the oral mindset. These are the agonies of the great woman of faith. Before starting her ministry in earnest, Jesus gives her one last heroic test: she must fight a dragon for three days. One wonders if the reference to the dragon in Revelation is envisioned here. The struggle is epic and her wounds are numerous but at last she prevails. She may then embark on her ministry.

Volahavana Germaine incarnates an oral theology. She participates in the great \textit{agon}. Learning is not by quiet reflection or long years in school, it is the result of visions and dreams and even resurrection. The sermons she preaches are equally dramatic; they are “hell-fire and brimstone” in their tone.\textsuperscript{141} They are the very act of power that makes healing and exorcism possible. This connection between the power of preaching and release from demons and disease is spelled out directly in many places, as in Pitaka’s thesis:

\textsuperscript{139} Oliver Carlson. Interview, 11/12/2004.
\textsuperscript{140} See Tsivoery’s account in Thunem, Rasamoela et al., \textit{Ny Tantaran’ny Fifohazana.}, cited above.
\textsuperscript{141} Oliver and Gene Carlson, Interview, 11/12/2004.
Niara-dâlna ka tsy misaraka mandrakariva anim’ny fitoriana ny Tenin’Andriamanitra nataon’i Mama Volahavana Germaine ny asa famoahana demonia sy fampaherezana. Fa tena nahasintona olona tokoa izany satria nahakasika fanasitrananana sy fampaherezana ny olona niharan’ny olona maro samihafa tamin’ny fianana.

The work of exorcising demons and strengthening (laying on of hands) accompanied and never parted with the preaching of the Word of God done by Mama Volahavana Germaine. For this truly attracted people because it touched upon healing and strengthening people pursued by many different problems in life. 142

As Rainisoalambo urged his followers not to preach without the effects being seen – unlike the preachers of his day – so Nenilava understood that preaching is followed by its evidence, that indeed the Word of God is one of power and that power actually, physically, in the here and now, changes things. She took special interest in this regard in Mark 16:15-20, otherwise known as the ‘Longer Ending.’ It may be because one of her call experiences happened during a visit by Pastor Petera on Ascension Day. 143 One of the texts assigned for Ascension Day is Mark 16:15-20. We will return to this ending in Chapter 3 for a closer look. Here, however, I want to note that although the current practice of the Fifohazana is to read four foundational texts, a form of ‘words of institution,’ for the service of exorcism and laying on of hands, Nenilava often had only one text read when she ‘worked’ and that was Mark 16:15-20. 144 The clear connection in this text between the preached Word and the effects of that Word (exorcism of demons, speaking in tongues, handling poisonous snakes safely, protection from poison, healing the sick) is significant for an oral theology. These are the hard-won results of the struggle and that struggle is what the hearers are invited into. Her admirers in the Fifohazana remark often about the efficacy of her preaching by noting that

143 Emmanuel Ranetsa, “Ankarimalaza - Inenilava,” Ny Mpamangy 1953: 36..
people *mibebaka sy mitomany* (or *migogogogo*), that is “repent and cry” (or “sob”). There is physical evidence of the event of repentance taking hold.

Like Rainisoalambo’s awakening movement, Volahavana Germaine’s and that of those revival leaders in between them can safely be said to rest on the thaumaturgical response to crisis that Wilson outlined. Nenilava is not interested in changing the greater society by a major reform or act of prophetic violence. She lived in that world and rejected it. The world of her battle is spiritual and she uses that language but clearly steers away from the political realm. Nowhere did I find a criticism of the French colonial powers or the independent Malagasy state. Instead, with Jesus as her instructor, she conquers the language of France and masters the language of heaven. In a society that is deeply communal, she offers individual hope. Her calls are for individual repentance and her “chapters and verse” given to supplicants are for individual salvation. She calls people to rise above their suffering, to endure and so prevail.

The only recording I was able to find of Volahavana was of a sermon delivered on August 2, 1976 that would have been during one of the annual meetings of the *Tobilehibe* at Ankaramalaza during the service for the setting apart of *mpiandry* [shepherds/remaining ones]. The recording is of poor quality but I was able to have the sermon transcribed and was later given another transcription done previously. The two transcriptions help form the basis for the translation. Although the words are difficult to understand, especially for a non-native speaker because of the sound quality, the tone of Nenilava’s delivery is clear. Her voice rises and falls. At times she almost shouts and at others she is calm. Her tone is reminiscent of the “hell-fire and brimstone” preachers of the southern United States from a

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145 Thunem, Rasamoela et al., *Ny Tantaran’ny Fifohazana* passim.
generation or two ago. It is, in its own way, quite engaging. Her tone alone would tell of the battle she envisions herself in. This tone is not used by most Malagasy Lutheran preachers today. In the forty recordings of Lutheran preachers made for this project, none replicates or approaches her style. The text on which she preached was Matthew 7:1-11.

The sermon is sewn together by biblical common places that are keyed, in part, by the images arising from the text. Jesus says, “Don’t throw what is holy to the dogs” and Nenilava relates that to the Syro-Phonecian woman in Mark 7, though she mistakenly titles her Samaritan.\textsuperscript{146} The oral strategy of one idea following a key idea from the previous section is clear. Note that she follows up a question put to her audience about giving the clothes off one’s back with an aside on taking care of their vestments. She plays on the cultural aversion of the Malagasy to things canine, indeed referring to someone as a dog is considered the worst of insults. All of her examples are those drawn from the Gospels: dogs, pigs, and foolish virgins. Her two most significant strategies are repetition and engagement of the context before her – the service of setting apart for the new mpiandry. In terms of traditional Lutheran categories, there is much law and little gospel, though the gospel is sounded at the end. The reader is referred to Appendix 6 for the full text and a translation.

\textbf{Conclusion}

The spoken Word, with its peculiar powers, enlivens and even conquers the literate world that first brought the Gospel of Jesus Christ to Madagascar. Each of these great revival leaders stressed the power and efficacy of the Word preached for healing and exorcism. For Rainisoalambo and the Disciples of the Lord, the power of the preached Word

\textsuperscript{146} This simple shift from “Syro-Phonecian” to “Samaritan” is characteristic of how stories in an oral culture can change without the ‘canon’ of a written source for correction.
effected health in the sick and the demon possessed so that “A cure was looked upon as the
equivalent to conversion or the triumph of faith.”\textsuperscript{147} It might be argued that these leaders
represent a past that is slipping away as literacy is embraced on a wider scale and a more
scientific world-view is engaged in Madagascar and especially among Christians. The most
recent manual for *mpiandry* and members of the Ankaramalaza branch of the *Fifohazana*
attest otherwise. In the second paragraph of the first chapter we find this statement:

Asa sy vokatry ny Fanahy Masina ny Fifohazana, amin’ny alàlan’ny Tenin’Andriamanitra. Koa ny antom-pisiany, araka izay nanendren ’Andriamanitra azy, dia tsy misy hafa ata-tsy ny fanambarana sy ny fanatanterahana ny Tenin’Andriamanitra, na izay voalazan ’ny Soratra Masina irery ihany, amin’ny alàlan’ny fitorio-teny sy ireo asam-pamantarana momba azy (cf. Mar. 16:20), ilazâna fa tsy maty na matory na azo atao toy ny anangan¬
gonano sanatria ny Tenin’Andriamanitra fa ‘velona sy mahery’ mandrakariva (Heb. 12:4), fa ‘ny lanitra sy ny tany ho levona, fa ny teniko tsy mba ho levona’ hoy ny Tompo (Mat.24:35).

The *Fifohazana* (Awakening) is the work and result of the Holy Spirit, by the
intermediary of the Word of God. And so its reason for existing, according to God’s
appointment of it, is none other than the announcement and the accomplishment of the
Word of God, or that which is spoken of in Holy Scripture alone, by means of the
preaching of the Word and those works of signs concerning it (cf. Mark 16:20), which
says that the Word of God is not dead nor sleeps nor can be likened in the least to
empty tales but is ‘alive and strong’ always (Hebrews 12:4), for ‘the heavens and the
earth will pass away, but my word will not pass away,’ says the Lord (Matthew
24:35).\textsuperscript{148}

\textsuperscript{147} Rabeony, “The Disciples of the Lord,” 84.

\textsuperscript{148} Foto-pampianarana momba ny Asan’ny Mpiandry 15.
What in Luther’s theology has been called the *viva vox evangelii* strikingly fits the matrix of a primarily oral society even as that society embraces literacy and technology. The strong, living voice of God is that carried by the *mpiandry* and pastors even today. Perhaps it has a different level of intensity for the leaders such as Nenilava or Rainisoalambo, but the power of that Word is just as significant. The word for prayer and, subsequently the word adopted for Christianity, in Malagasy is *fivavahana*. The root of that word is *vava* or ‘mouth.’ It is no accident that the indigenization of Christianity in Madagascar would focus on the power of the Word.

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149 The reader is referred to a reference from Friedrich Gogarten, *Martin Luther, Predigten* (Jena: 1527). Found in John W. Doberstein, “Introduction to Volume 51,” *Luther’s Works: Sermons I*, eds. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, et al., vol. 51 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959) xviii-xix. “Friedrich Gogarten comments on the ‘remarkable objectivity’ of Luther’s sermons, the fact that the biblical text becomes the living Word of God in the act of preaching (*viva vox Evangelii*), the voice of Christ himself addressing the hearer who cannot escape and must of necessity hear it and reject or accept it.” Or again the reader may wish to consult: E. Theodore Bachmann, “Introduction to Word and Sacrament,” *Luther’s Works: Word and Sacrament I*, eds. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, et al. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1960). “According to Luther’s understanding, the Word of God is not simply to be equated with the written text of the Scriptures, for it goes much deeper than historical description or moral precept. Rather, it is a uniquely life-imparting power, a message communicated by men in whom the Scriptures had become alive. The church, therefore, is for Luther ‘not a pen-house but a mouth-house,’ in which the living Word is proclaimed,” (p. xi-xii). The quote from Luther referenced in the preceding excerpt is from Martin Luther, “Adventspostille, Evangelium am I Adventssontag, 1522, Band 10 1,2,” *Luthers Werke* (Weimar: 1883ff.) 48. The quote in German reads, “Darumb ist die kirch ehn mundhawß, nit ehn fedderhawß.”

150 *Foto-pampianarana momba ny Asan’ny Mpiandry* 45.
Chapter 3: The Conquest of the Written Word: The Battle Revisited

Following the history of the lives of two of the great Fifohazana leaders in Chapter 2 I suggested that an oral mindset, an oral theology, has won out over a more literate mindset and theology in the Malagasy context. Emblematic of this victory is the use of Mark 16:9-20 by the Malagasy Lutheran Church and the Fifohazana movement. In Chapter 4 I will examine closely the sermons of Malagasy Lutheran pastors on this text. In this chapter, however, I would like to look at the theology and function of this pericope in the context of the Gospel of Mark and the canon of Scripture. The specific thesis of this chapter is simple: Mark 16:9-20 is an attempt by a later author/community to re-assert a primarily ‘oral’ theology over the ‘literate’ theology of the main body of the Gospel. This text therefore supports and informs a uniquely Malagasy theology of preaching.

The main premise of this chapter rests in the work of Werner Kelber and his seminal work, The Oral and the Written Gospel. Kelber postulates that the change in medium – from the oral to the written – for the transmission of the Gospel is itself key to the understanding of the Gospel attributed to Mark. We will examine Kelber’s thesis below.

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First, however, it is necessary to clarify the problem posed by the ending of Mark’s gospel at 16:8 and the several conclusions that the textual tradition has supplied.

**The Ending of Mark’s Gospel**

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.⁴

Mark 16:1-8 has puzzled and confounded readers and scholars for centuries. Compared to the other three gospels held to be canonical, Mark is the starkest, providing no appearance of the risen Lord to his disciples. Instead, a youth (νεανίσκον) announces to the women who have come to anoint the body that Jesus is risen and has gone before his disciples to Galilee, and the women are to give the message to them. The women instead flee distraught and the message is not delivered. The ending begs the obvious question, if the women told no one, then how did the news get out? The ending seems unsatisfying, even a let down.

To add to the discomfort around this ending, the last two words of the gospel, ἐφοβοῦτο γάρ ("For they were afraid") present specific problems. It is unusual in Greek to end a sentence, and certainly then a book, with the conjunction γάρ or for γάρ and a verb to make up the entirety of a sentence, though neither are unheard of. The conjunction would

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⁴ Mark 16:1-8 New Revised Standard Version (all Biblical quotations in this chapter are from the NRSV unless specified otherwise).
favor anticipating something to follow and yet nothing does. That books and sentences have ended with \( \gamma\acute{\alpha} \) has been demonstrated, citations can be found in the lexicon entry\(^5\) and P.W. van der Horst produced a short essay further demonstrating the possibility.\(^6\) The verb \( \phi\omicron\beta\omicron\omicron\omicron\alpha\omicron\omicron\omicron \) leads one to expect an object, an infinitive or a complementary clause: they were frightened of something, to do something, or by something. Here no object, infinitive or clause is supplied. The verb, however, can be intransitive or transitive. The lack of an object, infinitive or clause is therefore not unique.\(^7\) Indeed, \( \phi\omicron\beta\omicron\omicron\omicron\alpha\omicron\omicron\omicron \) takes no object, infinitive or clause in five other places in Mark’s gospel: 5:15, 33, 36; 6:50 and 10:32. Speculation on the reasons for the gospel’s abrupt ending include the suggestions that the evangelist suddenly discontinued his project due to illness, imprisonment or death, perhaps even martyrdom or that possibly the ending was lost early in the transmission process or that someone or group deliberately suppressed the original ending because it was heretical or divergent from the other canonical gospels and thus unacceptable.\(^8\) For all these commentators and scholars the key point is that Mark had another ending in mind, that the termination of the gospel with \( \epsilon\phi\omicron\beta\omicron\omicron\omicron\tau\omicron\acute{\gamma} \) is too problematic to be acceptable. Arguing

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\(^7\) \( \Phi\omicron\beta\omicron\omicron\omicron\omega \) in Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon* 862-63.

from the internal evidence in the gospel itself, these scholars assert that the true ending is
lost. Schweizer, for example, believes that the theme of opening blind eyes seen earlier in
the gospel requires a recitation of that eye-opening resurrection event in Galilee.9 Swete
argues from a psychological vantage point: the fear of the moment by needs must have
resolved into joy and the message got out. That part of the story is therefore lost.10 After
taking aim at each of many explanations for the intentional ending of the gospel at 16:8,
Gundry suggests that the need for reproducing a strong Jesus who conquers through the
resurrection in order to bolster the apologetic appeal of the message would require a different
ending than the one left us.11 He is especially concerned that the failure of the resurrected
Christ to appear to the disciples would make him an unreliable character.12

Textual critics have argued for some time that the oldest and best evidence from the
extant materials suggest that 16:8 is nonetheless the end of the gospel.13 It is clear to all but
a few scholars that the other appended endings are not original to the gospel or authored by
the same individual. We shall deal with these endings below. We have, therefore, several
endings possible with each ending giving an interpretive rendering of the overall text.

A number of scholars, accepting the text critical evidence, have focused upon 16:8 as
the intended ending of the gospel. E. Trocmé offers a slight variation on this understanding.
He proposes that the evangelist knew of no christophanies following the discovery of the

9 Schweizer, The Good News according to Mark 373.
10 Swete, The Gospel according to St. Mark 399.
11 Robert H. Gundry, Mark: A Commentary on his Apology for the Cross (Grand Rapids, MI: William B.
12 Gundry, Mark 1016.
13 For a clear explication of this conclusion see D. C. Parker, The Living Text of the Gospels (Cambridge:
empty tomb. Being true to the traditions of the church, as he knew them, the author then ends his work at 16:7 with 16:8 being a later addition by an editor. W. R. Telford argues that Mark intentionally omits the resurrection appearances to the disciples and the restoration of Peter after the denial. Further, Mark has the youth tell the women that they will see the resurrected Jesus in Galilee, not Jerusalem as in Luke and John. For Telford, this indicates a response by the Markan community, primarily Gentile-Christian, against the Jewish-Christian leadership and hegemony exhibited by the Jerusalem church. The trajectory of the messianic secret theme predominant in the body of the gospel text is therefore continued through to the end. The disciples did not understand Jesus as the Son of God prior to the crucifixion and they do not understand even at the resurrection. Donahue and Harrington suggest that Mark’s intention is to demonstrate that the only character in the story worthy of imitation is Jesus as both the male and female disciples have failed in their recognition and belief in Jesus. Andrew Lincoln exegetes the passage in light of a “promise-failure” motif. He notes that as the gospel opens with the story of the cleansing of a leper who is commanded ὄρα μηδενὶ μηδὲν εἶπης, (See that you say nothing to anyone). The leper disobeys and the secret is out. At the end of the gospel, Mark writes, καὶ οὐδὲν ὁ οὐδὲν εἶπαν (They said nothing to anyone). Now the promise in verse 7, a promise of the Parousia, is tempered by the failure of the women much as the order to remain silent given to the leper is

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broken with his proclamation of Jesus’ miraculous healing.\(^\text{18}\) This particular exegesis deals well with the experience of a delayed Parousia, a time after the resurrection where promise and failure continue to be the experience of disciples.

Weeden offers the idea that the author of Mark is specifically targeting the \(\theta\epsilon\iota\omicron\varsigma\ \ddot{a}n\eta\rho\) christologies and subsequent models for discipleship. The disciples are portrayed by Mark as having authority to exorcise demons and heal the sick, as having been entrusted with a secret teaching which the \(\theta\epsilon\iota\omicron\varsigma\ \ddot{a}n\eta\rho\) entrusts only to his confidants, and as unwilling to accept Christians who do not recognize them. Moreover, they refuse the approach of children and two even seek honor above and beyond that of the others.\(^\text{19}\) By emphasizing the crucifixion, the messianic secret, and the unrelenting obtuseness of the disciples, Mark asserts a \textit{theologia crucis} over against a \textit{theologia gloriae}. This model is consistently held out as the women flee from the tomb without completing their assignment. “The silence of the women robs the disciples of their apostolic credentials.”\(^\text{20}\) This is a similar position to that of Telford above. Put more simply and without the pejorative stress is the position of Brevard Childs. He states his reason for accepting the 16:8 ending thus:

The mystery of Christ’s revelation as both concealing and revealing his identity continues past the resurrection. It is still possible to misunderstand. The mystery of Christ’s pre-resurrection identity still obtains for the post-resurrection community because, even following Christ’s vindication by God, his followers can continue in fear and astonished unbelief.\(^\text{21}\)

\(^{18}\) Lincoln, “The Promise and the Failure of Mark 16:7, 8,” 290.


All the above interpretations for why Mark ended his gospel at 16:8 ignore a fundamental shift in the transmission of the Gospel in the life of the Church. With the production of Mark the gospel shifts medium from the oral to the written. By paying attention to this crucial change, Kelber opens a new and helpful hermeneutic for understanding Mark.

The Paradox of a Written Parable

Is the difference between the oral and the written media so great as to significantly affect the meaning of communication when one or the other is utilized? For Kelber the answer is yes. To begin with, spoken words are events in time; the moment they are uttered they pass out of existence. Written words are static artifacts, existing not temporally but spatially. For a spoken word to communicate an audience of at least one must be present; the audience must be contemporaneous and physically proximate. Cues from gesture, the environment, the culture will all be in play adding to meaning. Written words, fixed in space, can be transported over time and geography without the producer or the receiver ever meeting. Written words are thus always somewhat de-contextualized by definition. The absence of the producer from the receiver is not only possible but rather preferred. The producer has time to reflect, to consider and to construct without the immediate demands of a live audience and the receiver may ponder, review and appropriate the material at leisure. How meaning is communicated, therefore, is significantly different in the two media. That Mark shifted the medium of his story from the oral to the written, Kelber believes, is as much a part of what Mark wished to communicate as the words themselves.

Kelber begins his examination of Mark’s gospel from the vantage point of an oral hermeneutic looking for what is distinctly oral in the material and its composition. Arguing that this is possible, he notes, “The objectifying, controlling power of the written medium, while taking the life out of spoken language, can freeze oral forms and preserve them in fossilized profiles.”\textsuperscript{23} In the oral features of Mark’s opus, Kelber finds several types that, while not intended to be exhaustive, will help demonstrate his thesis. The two major areas addressed are stories and sayings and, finding that Mark has a relatively small representation of sayings (in itself interesting), he moves first to the stories. These he categorizes as heroic (healings), didactic (apophthegmata), polarization (exorcisms), and parabolic.\textsuperscript{24}

Beginning with the heroic stories, Kelber explores these stories for their common points and their disjunctures. The forms of each of these categories of stories are relatively stable admitting flexibility but within recognizable patterns. The repeating of the pattern from story to story, the use of common places and an agonistic tone are all hallmarks of oral construction. Pattern and commonplace serve to stabilize the story in memory and to provide a frame of reference for the listener. Variability within the frame sparks interest and allows the storyteller the freedom to play with the parts much as a jazz musician might expand upon a theme without abandoning the form. Conflict maintains interest, but, to be manageable, is reduced to two characters. For this reason, for example, when one looks at the polarization stories, where demons are exorcised, evil is personified. These stories are not designed to


\textsuperscript{24} Kelber, \textit{The Oral and the Written Gospel} 45.
engender deep reflection on the part of the listener or to cause the listener to ask existential questions. It is not possible, given the demands of the oral medium, to reflect on the nature and essence of a concept or a person. Instead, the construction enables the story to come alive for the listeners so that they are instantly present themselves in the story. Indeed, the concept of presence is a key to oral hermeneutics.

Using this oral hermeneutic, Kelber is able to draw a picture of an oral Christology. Jesus is represented in these stories in simple, one-sided terms. The complexity of his personality and interior life are not presented. They cannot be, given the demands of the medium for transmission and storage in memory! Thus Jesus is presented as a heroic figure who, though larger than life, “remains deeply committed to life.” The contours of who Jesus is are drawn by his conflicts with others who are equally described in simple and stark terms. Hence the profile of Jesus is unambiguous, as the conflicts of good and evil admit no grey areas. The concept of a suffering savior however is ambiguous. The ambiguity of a crucified messiah, who through suffering and death defeats evil, lies outside the ken of an oral hermeneutic.

What an oral hermeneutic conveys with great effectiveness is presence. The oral medium can only be actualized in the present and thus invites the listener into the story as it is presented. Jesus is therefore present in the stories about him performed by the speaker. Jesus speaks anew from their lips as a living and immediate Lord. The power seen in the words of Jesus is presently power for those listening.

26 Kelber, The Oral and the Written Gospel 52.
27 Kelber, The Oral and the Written Gospel 55.
28 Kelber, The Oral and the Written Gospel 55.
A further oral principle identified by Kelber is that of the interchangeability of actions and words. “Actions manifest a didactic intent, which pulls them into the orbit of words, and words embody the vitality of happenings, which makes them indistinguishable from actions.” So it is that Jesus’ “voice carries the power of action. It calls into discipleship, calms the sea, creates friend and foe, cures the sick, and ruins the fig tree.”

And Jesus’ presence and power are therefore made manifest now in the performance of the orator. This means, by extension, that the speaker participates in the power of the Christ in a real way and accounts for the importance of the prophetic voice and those who used it in the early church.

These ‘christs and prophets’ of the early church were not only the leaders of their day; they bore the responsibility for the transmission of the faith from one generation to the next. Given the nature of the oral-based education, this transmission depends heavily upon memory. All the techniques of oral storytelling listed above plus those already referred to in the first chapter of this work such as alliteration, rhyme, repetition, etc., help to situate the message in memory. Drawing on the work of Eric Havelock, *Preface to Plato,* in which the author addresses the seemingly strange repudiation by Plato of the poets and their methods for his republic, Kelber notes that the means for the conservation of cultural material in the life of pre-literate people was poetry, not because of the more modern idea of ‘art for art’s sake’ but because the technique of poetry enabled that material to be retained in memory. “Learning under those circumstances was primarily a process of recapitulation and emotive identification.”

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30 Havelock, *Preface to Plato.*
31 Kelber, *The Oral and the Written Gospel* 96.
cultural heritage of Homeric Greece is evident in the discipleship program utilized by Jesus as evidenced in the gospels. Just as Plato would ban this mimetic form of education because it prevents the necessary distanciation of the knower and the known, the ability of the one reflecting to step back from the process of learning by engagement and see that which is under consideration which is facilitated by the technology of writing, so Kelber sees Mark using a similar strategy to deal with the crisis facing the church for which he writes.

A Christology that cannot reflect seriously on the nature of crisis in the life of the church because of its media-produced strictures is inadequate to the task of passing on the faith to a generation experiencing significant, life-altering change. Kelber identifies this crisis as the Roman Jewish War that culminated in the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple. The crisis, he feels, is described in Mark 13:

Then Jesus asked him, “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down. ... When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come...For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs. ... Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; and you will be hated by all because of my name.”

And the concern that this engenders for Mark is also clearly described when Mark records Jesus as saying,

Beware that no one leads you astray. Many will come in my name and say, “I am he!” and they will lead many astray. ... And if anyone says to you at that time, “Look! Here is the Messiah!” or “Look! There he is!” – do not believe it. False messiahs and false prophets will appear and produce signs and omens, to lead astray, if possible, the elect.

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32 Mark 13:2, 7-8, 12-13.
33 Mark 13:5-6, 21-22.
We have seen in Mark 1-12 the mimetic process of education and formation that Jesus has used with his disciples. Common to almost all commentaries on Mark is the clear picture that Mark paints of the failure of the disciples to understand and embrace Jesus’ teaching. With the apocalyptic message of Chapter 13 and the failure of the disciples throughout, Mark has demonstrated the crisis of meaning that the ‘oral theologians’ of his day had reached. “…As social events contradicted the power of prophetic words, their proclamation of presence was exposed as false and a crisis of confidence inevitable. The experience of disconfirmation undermined the credibility of prophetic authorities and faith in their oral, prophetic effectiveness.”

Oral theology in the hands of those mimetically trained does not adapt well to the demands of a theologia crucis critically necessary in the face of deep suffering and reversal.

It was noted above that there are few examples of the sayings tradition in Mark’s gospel and even the number of parables is less by comparison to the other canonical works. Kelber raises this as a clue to what Mark is doing. Because the sayings tradition in the mouths of itinerant prophets and teachers would signal the powerful presence of Christ, Mark’s Jesus speaks less. Indeed, in the two sections of the gospel where Jesus is presented as able orator (4:1-34; 13:5b-37), Kelber points out, the depiction encouraged by Mark tends to undermine an oral synthesis. In the Parable of the Sower (4:1-34), the failure of the seed (word) to take root and the explanation that Jesus speaks in parables as much to hide as to reveal, minimizes the effect of presence in Jesus’ teaching. The projection in chapter 13 of a future kingdom, rather than a realized eschatology, again pushes away the notion of

34 Kelber, The Oral and the Written Gospel 101.
35 Kelber, The Oral and the Written Gospel 45.
The effect is to emphasize a sense of mystery and retroject the reader/listener into the life of the Christ in the past, a feat that oral presentation makes difficult.

Parables present a special problem. Kelber reminds us of the specific qualities of a parable: they begin with what appears to be conventional logic and as they unfold turn that logic upside down. They tend to be extravagant in their description and glory in paradox and hyperbole. They upset the credible and offer up the incredible as a new possibility. “The impact of …parables…inclines toward the culture subversive… Parabolic speech, in order [sic] words, exercises demoralizing pressures on ‘the project of making a whole out of one’s life.’”

Parables are metaphorical in that they attempt to express what cannot be expressed directly. And parables are quintessentially oral in their nature. They require the give and take of speaker and audience. As such a written parable is, in a manner of speaking, an oxymoron.

According to Kelber, Mark utilizes his own ‘theory of parables’ found in Mark 4:11-12. Essentially, Kelber summarizes, a parable is discourse that carries “a cryptic message that casts to the outside those who cannot fathom it, while confirming as insiders those to whom it is revealed.” With these definitions in hand, we come to the nub of Kelber’s interpretation of Mark.

If Mark has written a gospel, he has chosen to use a medium that purposely overturns the oral synthesis that supports oral Christology and the standard-bearers of its

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37 Early literature was intended for public reading, not private meditation. A listener to the text being performed aloud might have had a similar experience to that of the reader as the first act of distanciation was that of the writer writing away from an audience.
38 Kelber, The Oral and the Written Gospel 73.
39 Kelber, The Oral and the Written Gospel 121.
transmission. “The story self-authenticates its new, redemptive medium over against the prevailing authorities of oral transmission. It is a story in which its own medium history is deeply implicated.” With the logic of parabolic thought, Mark has turned the oral synthesis upside-down. Disciples who studied in the mimetic fashion, who had parables explained to them, are now outsiders unable to understand what their Lord is doing or why crucifixion and resurrection are necessary. The new insiders, those listening to this story that has been plotted to take away the plurality of stories that orality produces, now hear of a suffering messiah whose death overcomes evil. The massive crisis of the Judeo-Christian world, the Jewish-Roman War and the destruction of the Temple, the overturning of the ‘world as we know it,’ is now understandable in a crucified and risen Lord.

Coming back to the ending of Mark’s gospel at 16:8 with the women fleeing in terrified silence, Mark has with his parabolic strategy, undermined the oral hegemony of the standard-bearers and called forth a more nuanced and reflective Christology.

More recent scholarship has built on Kelber’s theses while challenging certain aspects. Richard Horsley and Joanna Dewey have emphasized that Mark’s Gospel is an oral composition scribe recorded rather than scribe produced. Furthermore, it operates in

40 Kelber, *The Oral and the Written Gospel* 130.

41 Kelber, *The Oral and the Written Gospel* 130.

the performance arena, as described by John Miles Foley, more readily than as a text written to be read by a solitary reader. As such, Horsley and Dewey would argue, in line with J. Lee Magness’ work, that the abrupt ending at 16:8 is more likely a rhetorical strategy that indeed leads the listeners to draw their own conclusions of the powerful presence of the risen Lord. Kelber, at the time that The Oral and the Written Gospel was produced, still thought of a single writer composing as s/he wrote. This position he has modified. More significantly, Kelber would rather argue for a Traditionsbruch (a term borrowed from Jan Assmann), a significant rupture in the tradition of the Christian faith to this period. He states:

My argument was, and is, that Mark, living under the impact of the catastrophe of 70 C.E., facilitated a Traditionsbruch, a rupture with tradition – a premise that Dewey basically accepts. Under those circumstances, tradition could no longer serve automatically as a basis, and those who could be expected to be the carriers of tradition had become problematic. Composing a narratively generated return to the foundational figure, Mark dissociated himself from the first-level bearers of tradition, writing a second-level foundation story in ways that explained the present demise and offered a way into the future….For hearers who lived in the aftermath of the catastrophic events, Mark’s narrative must have had a powerfully relevant impact. The longer ending took the edge off Mark 16:8, because it was understandably perceived to be an offensive proposition.

43 John Miles Foley, The Singer of Tales in Performance.


45 See note 23.


My own sense holds more closely to Kelber’s. If what we have in the current form of Mark’s gospel (accepting that the text ends with 16:8) is the privileged script, then this particular version of the Mark “performance” was held to be of particular significance against what would already be standard fare that had little need to be stabilized by a written text. That the three other canonical gospels and the Longer Ending, discussed below, insisted on describing Christophanies leads one to conclude that this particular version needed a stronger reinforcement against the other versions.

The Other Endings of Mark’s Gospel

Above we noted that textual scholars generally have concluded that Mark’s gospel ends intentionally at 16:8 but the canon has contained what has become known as the Long Ending (16:9-20) for almost the same amount of time. D. C. Parker asserts that evidence exists for both the Short Ending (16:8) and the Long Ending from the second century.48 Parker describes a total of six different configurations for endings of Mark as known in the textual traditions. Included in these are combinations which do or do not utilize two additional pieces, one of which he terms the ‘Intermediate Ending’ found on its own after 16:8:

And all that had been commanded them they told briefly to those around Peter. And afterward Jesus himself sent out through them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.

And also there is a textual variant for the Long Ending after verse 14 known as the Freer Logion that appears in manuscript W and was probably known to Jerome:49

48 Parker, The Living Text of the Gospels 137.
And they excused themselves saying, “This age of lawlessness and unbelief is under Satan, who does not allow the truth and power of God to prevail over the unclean things of the spirits. Therefore reveal your righteousness now” – thus they spoke to Christ. And Christ replied to them, “The term of years of Satan’s power has been fulfilled, but other terrible things draw near. And for those who have sinned I was handed over to death, that they may inherit the spiritual and imperishable glory of righteousness that is in heaven.”

While these other endings are interesting in their own right, they did not appear in the canonical texts of the church but are rather found in variant manuscripts. As Brevard Childs points out, we cannot ignore the significance of the fact that the Church has for centuries read the text with the Long Ending appended.\(^50\) Furthermore, the shape of the Church’s understanding of the Gospel has been formed by this ending for it is only in more recent years that the question regarding the text’s authenticity has been noted in the editions to which people had access. The King James Version (KJV), for instance, makes no notation or mark to indicate that 16:9-20 are not original or that there is any doubt as to their provenance. The Jerusalem Bible has a note but makes this telling comment in it: “Many MSS omit vv. 9-20 and this ending to the gospel may not have been written by Mark, *though it is old enough.*”\(^51\) It would seem that the note telegraphs a prejudice in favor of the Long Ending!

For the Malagasy context, as we will reiterate below, in the 1835 Edition of *Baiboly Masina*\(^52\) (a text based primarily on KJV) no note or marking is given to indicate the shift in author. The 1912 edition of *Ny Baiboly*,\(^53\) and all subsequent editions use brackets ([ …]) to indicate a break, though they are not prominent and there is no explanatory note. And the

\(^{50}\) Childs, *The New Testament as Canon* 94-95.


1991 Dikanteny Iambonona Eto Madagasikara of Testamenta Vaovao (Joint Translation in Madagascar of the New Testament, colloquially known as the DIEM)\(^5^4\) carefully separates out each of the possible endings and notates why clearly below. It should be noted, however, that this translation is controversial for Lutherans who pulled out of the joint translation project over issues relating to the use of regional slang and the choice for rendering the name of Jesus. It is therefore not read in worship and may only be marginally thought of for study.

We have already noted that most commentators, until recently, have been uncomfortable with the sudden ending at 16:8 and felt that even if 9-20 were not original, an ending of some sort had followed verse 8. The reasons have been explored. Several questions, however, spring to mind that need to be addressed. First, why was this ending appended? The Intermediate Ending would suffice. Why not simply take a portion of one of the other gospels and append it here? Why is the break between v. 8 and v. 9 so obvious? Why didn’t a redactor ‘smooth out the edges?’ If we take as granted that v. 8 is the ending that Mark intended, especially in light of Kelber’s analysis, what does that imply for this ending? If, indeed, Mark’s gospel is a parable of absence, a critique of the prophetic voices of the church in a time of crisis and a thoroughgoing rejection of a Christology of presence, what is it about this addendum that makes its place here so necessary?

**The End Changes (Almost) Everything**

First we should pay attention to the actual text:

Now after he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. She went out and told those who had been with him, while they were mourning and weeping. But when they heard

that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it. After this he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them. Later he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were sitting at the table; and he upbraided them for their lack of faith and stubbornness, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover." So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it.

The first sign that there is a disjuncture appears as the Long Ending begins with a time signature that is somewhat at odds with the beginning of the chapter. While redundancy is not an evil, especially in literature so closely allied to the oral, it is unexpected and uses different words: πρωί πρώτης σαββάτου ("early on the first of the week" [my translation] as opposed to λίαν πρωί τῆς μιᾶς σαββάτων "very early on the first of the week" (my translation). And while Jesus has been mentioned earlier in 16:1–8, he is not specifically mentioned here again so that the implied referent is far from the verb. Immediately there is a signal that a rupture has occurred and we are dealing with something different than what came before. It seems strange that the editor(s) who appended this particular text to the end of the gospel did not work to make for a smoother transition. Instead we are left with a clear disjuncture as if those who appended the text wished to say, "Here is something different."

Though we can only speculate, was the reason for leaving the seams of the stories frayed similar to that of Toscanini when, in 1926, he conducted the debut of the opera Turandot and after the suicide scene laid down his baton, turned to the audience and said, "Here Maestro
Puccini laid down his pen. Death was stronger than art”?

Those who appended this passage may have wanted to respect Mark’s work and leave open the possibilities the writer envisioned while at the same time reestablishing the oral standard bearers’ priority.

Not surprisingly, if we follow the plot line established in the other canonical gospels, Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene. What is slightly odd, however, is that the author mentions here that Mary had been exorcised of seven demons. Why is this relevant and why is it especially relevant here as she experiences the first christophany? It has been pointed out that Luke 8:2 also reports that Mary Magdalene had been exorcised of seven demons. It seems an odd detail to include here as none of the other gospels report this particular epithet at the resurrection. It is possible, as some suggest, that the ending of this gospel is a pastiche of information from the other gospels or from the known tradition. As we shall see, the next incident recorded closely resembles the Emmaus road story from Luke 24:13-35, the commissioning in verse 15 resembles that of Matthew 28:19-20 and the ascension scene in vv. 19-20 resembles that depicted in Luke 24:50-51 and Acts 1:9-10. But none of the christophanies recorded in the canonical gospels records the fact that Mary had seven demons.

Instead Luke records the number of Mary’s demons as part of a descriptive list of the women following Jesus. It may distinguish Mary from those women but here in the christophanic context might it have another function? The power of the risen Christ is the same power that exorcised demons in the past and will now do so into the future. The kingdom is not a mystery far off but present here in the power of this moment. Perhaps it is


56 Bratcher and Nida, A Translator’s Handbook 507.
fortuitous that Mary had seven demons, with seven being the symbol of plenitude. Is it that all demons are vanquished with the resurrection? If Mark has written his gospel in part to silence the prophetic voices, the author of the Long Ending has just re-opened Jesus’ mouth.

In the next section, as noted, two disciples are walking into the country, a synecdoche of the Emmaus story when they meet the risen Christ (who here in the Long Ending has still not been identified by name) in Luke. If this is truly a synecdoche of that story then it points to one of the quintessential proclamations of presence. In Luke’s account Christ is present specifically in the preached word as Christ ‘opens the Scriptures’ to them and reveals himself in the breaking of bread. Again, the presence of the risen Christ is made manifest in the spoken word and in the enacted sacrament within an oral environment. The author is once again taking aim at Markan Christology.

Both the appearance to Mary Magdalene and to the two walking into the country, end with the same result: the disciples still do not believe their message. The theme of unbelief from the body of the gospel has been picked up or the fact that it was already present in this unit recommended itself to those who chose to append it. Finally, when Jesus does appear in v. 14 Jesus takes them to task. The word here ὅνειδος (reproach, upbraid, insult) is strong and even might be seen to cast a pejorative tone. The writer is not unaware of the strong portrayal of the disciples as having failed. The response from the risen Christ, therefore, must be equally strong so that there is thematic unity and so that the commission to come may be accepted by rehabilitated apostles.

57 As noted earlier, this may be a composition designed to fit into the themes present in the gospel or it may have been pre-existent and appended by an editor. For simplicity’s sake, we will refer from here on to the writer, leaving open the possibility that we are dealing with a redacted, existing document.
The commission, as noted earlier, has similar tones to Matthew 28:19-20

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

“Go,” says Jesus, or perhaps more literally, “going (πορεύεσθε) do such and such.” In both Matthew and the Long Ending, the word is the same. The word, πορεύομαι is not used by Mark in the body of the gospel at all. It would be interesting, and probably not possible to ascertain, to know which came first, Matthew or the Long Ending. If the Long Ending were older, then it may be Matthew who is trying to attenuate an oral Christology. Kelber notes that because Mark broke the ground with the written medium, the other gospels had less weight on their shoulders in terms of restricting the oral features of their message. Matthew ends his gospel (28:20b) with a promise of presence to those whom Jesus has sent, “And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” The Long Ending goes much further. It equates the power of the spoken, proclaimed word with great signs and wonders and names them. If there were any doubt about the power of the oral medium, it is gone with these words:

And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.

Not only are those commissioned, the standard-bearers of the oral gospel, as Kelber calls them, empowered to speak in Christ’s name, the words that they speak effect the kingdom in the here and now. Signs and wonders are more than possibilities: they are the confirmation

59 Mark 16:17-18.
of the message. The presence and the power of the risen Christ have been fully re-established.

Exorcism of demons, glossalalia and the laying on of hands for healing are all works attested to elsewhere in the New Testament. Unique to the Long Ending are the claims that the disciples will safely handle deadly snakes and drink poison safely. That the latter was known as a ‘sign of the Lord’s favor or presence’ is attested by Eusebius (260-339/340):

“[Papias (60-135)] describes the resurrection of a dead person in his own lifetime, and a further miracle that happened to Justus, surnamed Barsabas, who swallowed a dangerous poison and by the grace of the Lord was none the worse.”60 Perhaps this supports, in part, Kelber’s thesis by demonstrating that the miracles and wonders were expanding beyond what was already known. As we shall see when we address the sermons on this text in Chapter 4, the miraculous protection from poison is a central theme in much of the Malagasy preaching on this text. As the oral mind sees cause and effect in personal terms, so many Malagasy assume that the evil or misery that befalls them is the work of nefarious powers and poisons utilized by foes. It is small wonder, then, that the reference to poison follows here.61

Surviving poison is not an occasional problem but a life-long necessity.

The final and perhaps most stunning blow the Long Ending makes against Mark’s theological project comes in the last two verses. Jesus ascends. Listening to the sermons by Malagasy preachers, I was taken over and over again by a recurring theme that my own mind, in considering the text, had not grasped: ubiquity. The ascension of Jesus to the right hand of God permanently assures the faithful of Christ’s presence. Christ is no longer


61 Snake handling is not as important a theme in Madagascar where there are no known poisonous snakes.
localized in the past as the pre-resurrection figure of history. Christ is wherever and whenever he is needed by the faithful particularly where his message is being proclaimed and confirmed “by the signs that accompany it.” Christ, at the ‘right hand’ of God sits at the nexus of God’s power and can make that present as promised.

**Conclusion**

That Volahavana Germaine (Nenilava) gravitated to this passage in her own theological journey seems the logical conclusion of a ministry that itself asserted the power and presence of the spoken word over the written word. That the theological position of the Fifohazana and the Malagasy Lutheran Church tends towards an oral Christology fits especially when the canon available de-emphasizes the reflective, literate Christology of absence that Kelber describes in Mark. Perhaps the only commentary on Mark printed by Trano Printy Fiangonana Loterana Malagasy (the Malagasy Lutheran Church Publishing House) is that written by the missionary Hiram Ellingson. Ironically, he entitled his work, *Ny Teny Tonga Nofo* (The Word Become Flesh), a reference to John’s gospel. Perhaps reflecting the strong appeal that this text has among the Fifohazana and his own more literate cultural background, Ellingson notes in the last sentence of his commentary:

*Araka izay voasoratra dia teny tsara ihany no hitantsika amin’i Marka 16:9-20. Kanefa mety angamba raha tsy mijery teolojia loatra amin ’ny teny voasoratra ao isika.*

62 See Chapter 2.

According to what is written it is only good words that we see in Mark 16:9-20. Perhaps, however, it might be better if we did not look too much at the theology in the words written here.  

As we shall see as we examine the sermons, regardless of Ellingson’s admonition, a truly Malagasy theology of homiletics rests clearly on this text. The Lord is present and works powerfully and wonderfully in the preaching of his Word.

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64 Ellingson, *Ny Teny Tonga Nofo* 250.
The true word is like a piece of sugar cane and so even if it is very long, it does not lose its sweetness.  

**Chapter 4: The Ascension Day Sermons**

When I began this study I wanted to know why Lutheran preachers in a culture rich in oral art, at whom missionaries of the previous age had wondered for their skills even from childhood, did not use that art in their preaching. This question was heightened when I noted that the students in my Homiletics class who were good in the oral art form known as *kabary* were also better preachers though their sermons were not structured in *kabary* style or littered with many allusions to it. The question then arose, “did the introduction of literacy, the emphasis upon the Book, also change the mindset and worldview of the Malagasy away from that which supported their oral art and so also inform their understanding of the theology underlying homiletics?” In other words, did the change in oratorical style reflect a change in the culture away from the oral towards the literate?

To test that question, I collected more than forty sermons on two texts, Mark 16:1-7 and 16:14-20, the pericopes for Easter and Ascension Day respectively in the Malagasy Lutheran Church’s lectionary Year I. The choice of these texts was not arbitrary. As noted in Chapter 3, the Longer Ending of Mark’s Gospel is an attempt at reasserting a primarily oral theology over Mark’s promulgation of a literate theology, that is, a theology of presence over against a theology of absence. What made the Longer Ending even more tantalizing

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3 The Malagasy Lutheran Church follows a revision of the one-year lectionary of the 16th century. The revision makes it a three-year lectionary.
was its significant place in the Fifohazana movement’s ritual for, and understanding of, exorcism. While other texts are often cited as foundational for the work of exorcism, the primary text alluded to is the Longer Ending. Tobilehibe Ankaramalaza (the latest and fourth branch of the Fifohazana movement) has published a textbook for the training of their mpiandry (shepherds). In Part 2, Chapter I: Momba ny Asa sy Fampaherezana (Concerning the Work and the Strengthening), the first paragraph states in catechetical style:

Avy aiza ary inona no atao hoe Asa sy Fampaherezana?


From where does the Work and the Strengthening (exorcism and blessing) come and what is it?

a) Their provenance and their limitations: This is according to the word of Jesus to his disciples when he said: “he will drive out demons in my name, …he will lay hands on the sick…” (Mark 16:17,18).

A homiletical exposition of these two texts, I felt, would give ample evidence for a basic understanding of the underlying theology and, if Kelber is right as I postulated in Chapter 3, then the contrast should be easily seen.

Eighteen pastors and one catechist – all of whom were male – and two mpiandry in the Fifohazana movement – both of whom were female – were given a radio/cassette recorder and asked to record their sermons for Easter and Ascension Day in 2004. One of the two mpiandry did not follow through; two of the pastors had trouble with the recordings

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4 Foto-pampianarana momba ny Asan’ny Mpiandry.
5 Foto-pampianarana momba ny Asan’ny Mpiandry 79, my translation, emphasis original.
6 Each respondent was given the equipment to keep along with sufficient tapes for the recording. They were asked to return the completed tapes to me when finished. Each filled out a release form allowing me to use their sermons in my research and beyond. The release form can be found in Appendix 2.
though one of them did provide his manuscript; and one of the pastors asked a catechist to preach for Ascension Day but she used a different text than that which was requested.

Initially, I was disappointed that my test sample preachers did not address the entirety of the text as I presented it to them. I had asked that they not follow the delimitation of the text as presented in the pericopes but rather include more of the verses than those appointed. So, for the Easter pericope I asked them to consider the preaching text to include 16:1-8, not ending at verse 7 as the lectionary prescribes. For the Ascension Day text I asked that they begin their consideration at verse 9 so the text would be 16:9-20, not just 14-20. None of my preachers showed any sign of having followed this request. In the next chapter we will consider the Easter texts and this approach to the text: that is, the disregarding of verse 8 will be seen to be significant.

Frustrated that none of the sermons referred to the additional verses, I asked students at the Lutheran Graduate School of Theology (Sekoly Ambony Loterana momba ny Teolojia or SALT) to record sermons based upon these texts. These sermons were decontextualized, preached for recording only without a congregation present. Some reference to these will be made below. My additional hope was to raise the number of women preachers under consideration. The Malagasy Lutheran Church does not ordain women, though they do allow women to preach, and I wished to have examples of female theologians’ preaching for comparison. Women are trained at the Master’s degree level, however, so there were available female participants at the SALT.

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7 The SALT students did not receive a recording device. Instead they were paid for their efforts. They, too, however, filled out a release form (Appendix 2) allowing me to use their sermons in my research and publications.
At first, I believed that their lack of direct comment on the requested verses would hamper my investigation. Over time, however, I came to realize that their absence is in itself significant. This is most especially true of the Easter text. In the case of the Ascension Day text, the omission is not critical.

The Preachers

I had little time between my decision to request recorded sermons on these Markan texts and the dates on which they would be preached. Luckily my work carried me around the island and I was able to secure enough recording devices in time. At the time I decided to take a geographical cross-section of the Malagasy Lutheran Church rather than concentrate research on one region. My results have been sufficient to demonstrate the oral and theological understanding of these preachers and so I have not reconsidered that decision, though a more homogenous group may yield further interesting information as each region has its own variations on their oral art (kabary, beko, jijy, etc.) and may have slight variations in religious expression. As a result of the geographical spread, ten of the eighteen recognized ethnic groups in Madagascar were represented, though in varying numbers.

The preachers ranged from 35 to 82 years of age. All had at least some high school education with all the clergy having had seminary training at various levels. Three of the preachers earned Master’s degrees overseas (one in Cameroon and two in Norway). Two had earned a Master’s degree at the SALT. Several of the SALT students who participated in the later set of sermons had studied several years at a Malagasy university. Two of the pastors in the field were former students of mine at the Regional Lutheran Theological Seminary at Bezaha as were three of the SALT students.
Each of the respondents was given a questionnaire and interviewed about his or her understanding of preaching and the manner in which the task is to be pursued. All of this data informs the analysis below.

The Longer Ending of Mark’s Gospel in Malagasy Context

When asked if they had been taught in their studies that Mark 16:9-20 was not considered original to the author of Mark, sixty-four percent of the participating preachers said that they had. That their teachers would have been aware of the academic consensus regarding the Longer Ending can be documented in several ways. First, the 1912 edition of *Ny Soratra Masina* (The Holy Scriptures)\(^8\) and subsequent editions through to the current edition of *Ny Baiboly [1965]* sets the Longer Ending apart by brackets, although without any notation as to why and these brackets themselves are hardly noticeable.\(^9\) Although it is not approved for use in worship by the Malagasy Lutheran Church (FLM), the Malagasy Bible Society’s newer translation of the New Testament, *Testamenta Vaovao*, often referred to as the *Dikaneny Iambonona Eto Madagasikara [1990]* (Joint Translation here in Madagascar) or D.I.E.M., not only has a distinctive heading for vss. 9-20 in all magiscule: *FAMARANANA LAVA* (Longer Ending) and adds with a similar heading the “Shorter Ending,” it even has an explanatory note.\(^10\) The most recent commentary available to Malagasy Lutheran preachers

\(^8\) *Ny Soratra Masina dia ny Testamenta Taloha sy ny Testamenta Vaovao* (London: The British and Foreign Bible Society, 1953).


\(^10\) D.I.E.M. 158, note g. The note reads: *Tsy ahitana ny and 9-20 stf [sora-tanana firaketana] tranainy maromaro; araka ireo stf ireo dia mifarana eo amin 'ny 16.8 ny Vaovao Mahafaly arak an'i Marka; kanefa bestaka ihany ireo stf ahitan ny and 9-20 na hoe “famaranana lava.”* The verses 9-20 are not seen in many old archival manuscripts; according to those archival manuscripts the Good News according to Mark ends at 16.8; in many of these archival manuscripts however verses 9-20 do appear or are called “the longer ending.”
is Hiram Ellingson’s *Ny Teny Tonga Nofo* that explains the problem of the disputed ending.\textsuperscript{11} Ellingson (1920-2002), a missionary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (1952-1979), makes a very significant caveat at the end of his work (already referred to in Chapter 3), that reveals his own, and perhaps more Western, prejudice regarding the text. He admonishes his readers not to put much theological stock in the Longer Ending.\textsuperscript{12}

Finally, from a very early stage in the Malagasy Lutheran Church’s history, the Norwegian missionaries who served in Madagascar were aware of the Longer Ending’s disputed origin. This is evidenced by the notes taken by the Rev. Dr. Bendix Ebbell (1865-1941) while a student at the University of Oslo in the late 1800’s.\textsuperscript{13} Dr. Ebbell, a missionary pastor and doctor with the NMS, who served in Madagascar from 1893 to 1912, compiled notes from lectures on the Gospel of Mark delivered by Professor Carl Paul Caspari (1814-1892).\textsuperscript{14} These notes provide us with two essential pieces of information about missionary exegetical training and, perhaps, by extension, teaching. First, from the inception of the Lutheran mission work in Madagascar, missionaries themselves had training that noted the dubious Markan authorship of 16:9-20. Second, Ebbell’s notes indicate that the canonicity of the text, that is, its relevance and authority for the Church, was never in question. Ebbell records:

\textsuperscript{11} Ellingson, *Ny Teny Tonga Nofo* 249-250.

\textsuperscript{12} Ellingson, *Ny Teny Tonga Nofo* 250.

\textsuperscript{13} Bendix Ebbell (1865-1941), was the founding doctor of the Lutheran Hospital in Antsirabe. See Danbolt, *Det Norske Misjonsselskaps Misjonærer 1842-1948*, 86.

\textsuperscript{14} Carl Paul Caspari was Professor of Old Testament at what was then called the University of Christiania from 1857 to 1892. Although an Orientalist and Old Testament scholar he was better known for his work in the Patristic period, especially the Apostolic and Nicene Creeds. See André Lemaire, and Magne Sæbø, *Congress Volume*, International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament (Oslo: Brill, 1998) 3.
Those who accept that the Gospel ends here with γὰρ, of them some say that the end of our gospel has been taken away, and the end is therefore false. Others accept that M. has not finished his Gospel in Gr[ee]k for some reason or another. Still others find support to suggest that another Evangelist finished it. They meant that our Gospel has stopped here. Jesus’ revelation [of himself] was not addressed because he [the evangelist] would depict Jesus as he appeared in his fleshly days. After this understanding, our Gospel has a very good ending. The latest [idea?], he says, is that Jesus was changed into another ‘Existence-form.’ It is very possible the gospel actually ends here. V. 9-20 could as well be from M. himself, an addition to the Gospel by M. himself in which he briefly reports the resurrection revelation.\(^{15}\)

While Caspari, in these notes on his lecture, leaves open the possibility that Mark, himself, is the author, he is also clear that the ending is not original to the gospel. What becomes evident, as the lecture proceeds, however, is that the Longer Ending has cannonical status for Caspari:

In vss. 15-18 following is Jesus’ Word to the 11, about this Jesus directed this Word to them knowing the occasion, which is implied in v. 14, some other time about which we do not know. Apparently he spoke this knowing the occasion, we must not let appearances deceive us. M. informs us what Jesus certainly told them after his resurrection, that he certainly said this, it was, it comes on for M., not with which

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\(^{15}\) Bendix Ebbell, *Forelæsningen over Marcusevangliet av Prof. Caspari*, University of Oslo, Notebook, NMS Archives, Stavanger, 41. My translation. The original notes utilize short hand contractions, the Bokmål orthography of the time and fragmented sentences. The above translation is my best approximation of the original.
occasion he said it. We can gladly consider vss. 9-14 as separate from v. 15 following as what the gospel wishes to communicate.\textsuperscript{16}

Thus these notes allow the conclusion that even for a theologically trained clergy with access to commentaries and informed teachers, the questions around the Longer Ending’s origins did not inhibit homiletical use nor inform it. These academic considerations, known since early missionaries’ teaching and preaching, have played little or no role in our contemporary Malagasy preachers’ considerations. Given the Malagasy context, it would not be reasonable to have expected otherwise. While today in Western Christian circles few would dispute the canonical status of Mark 16:9-20, the text has been demoted nevertheless, appearing in clearly demarcated ways to ensure that the reading is not seen to be continuous from v. 8 to v. 9ff.\textsuperscript{17} The Revised Common Lectionary used in North American Lutheran churches does not use Mark 16:9-20. Ellingson’s caution not to put much theological stock in this text is therefore consonant with his own background. When asked about the status of Mark 16:9-20, the graduate students at the Lutheran Graduate School of Theology had a very succinct answer: “Tsy soratry Marka io fa
Tenin’Andriamanitra” (“It is not Mark’s writing but it is the Word of God”).\textsuperscript{18} In keeping with Ong’s observation that primarily oral cultures are homeostatic, that is, they are uninterested in maintaining in memory information that is not relevant for their use and therefore slough it off,\textsuperscript{19} there can be little surprise that the preachers interviewed ignored it.

\textsuperscript{16} Ebbell, \textit{Forelæsningen over Marcusevanglient}, 42. My translation.

\textsuperscript{17} See NRSV and NIV.

\textsuperscript{18} Group interview, Graduate students, Sekoly Ambony Loterana momba ny Teolojia, Ivory Avaratra, Fianarantsoa, November 18, 2004. A list of participants is provided in the bibliography. My translation.

\textsuperscript{19} Ong, \textit{Orality and Literacy}, 46.
even those saying they remember being taught about the distinction between Mark’s work and the Longer Ending.

As noted in Chapter 2, Mark 16:9-20 has played an especially important role in the life of the Fifohazana movement’s self-understanding about its role and purpose and about the nature and practice of exorcism. Volahavana Germaine (Nenilava, founder of the last great Fifohazana branch) was said to use this text exclusively, without the other appointed readings, when she felt that the need for an exorcism was urgent. In the manual prepared by her branch of the Fifohazana movement already cited above, Mark 16:9-20 is often cited as the clear definition of their work and for the liturgical expression of their work (Asa sy Fampaherezana or exorcism). In Chapter 1 of Part 2, we read:


If we summarize, the Work and the Strengthening, according to how it is said in Holy Scripture, are “works bearing signs” (cf. Mark 16:17a), which are nothing other than God’s way of working to show his power for salvation, and for accomplishing that which he caused his servants to speak. “Works of grace” would be another way of expressing it. These “works of grace” however are empty, without power and without meaning, if the Word of God does not work with them clearly (that is the Word of God is their true strength and authority and attestation for their reason to exist), and if then it does not bring, and does not protect, faith.

The 2001 By-laws of the Union of Lutheran Fifohazana is even more direct in its understanding of the text and its meaning for the movement’s existence:

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21 Foto-pampianarana momba ny Asa ny Mpiandry, 83, my translation.
1. The Awakening is the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church (Joel 3:1-5), the result of the strength of the Word of God and which [trans.: the referent for this “which” should be “the Awakening” grammatically, but actually it refers to “God” in the phrase before. The sentence is grammatically incorrect in Malagasy.] [God] gave birth to by means of those LARGE CAMPS (Soatanana-Manolotrony-Ankaramalaza-Farihimena), in order to accomplish the command of Jesus in Mark 16:15-20.

It should be noted that all pastors in the Malagasy Lutheran Church are aware of the work of the Fifohazana and most teach in the training program for the mpiandry.

The Ascension Day Sermons

As a homiletician training Malagasy preachers, I had hoped to find more indigenous oratorical flair in the preaching of the Malagasy Lutheran Church, flair such as that found among the mpikabary (specialized orators in kabary style). Nonetheless, under analysis, these sermons reveal a truly oral theology, emphasizing presence, power, contest (agon), and privileging auditory forces. Moreover, the sermons demonstrate a clear preference for concrete, sensate expression over against abstraction and theoretical frames. Finally, the sermons are communal in nature, appealing to the community’s understanding rather than to that of the individual. Each of these characteristics is a point in the structure of the following analysis.

The context in which these preachers live and breathe is permeated by the work of the Fifohazana; it is not surprising that there are significant references to that work in their sermons. The preachers claim that preaching is an act of power that has clear and visible


22 Firaisan’ny Fifohazana Loterana (FiFiL) Fitsipika Fototra sy Fitsipika Anatiny, (Antananarivo: Trano Printy Fiangonana Lotera Malagasy, 2001), 6, my translation.
effects. Those ‘effects’ are the signs and wonders that accompany the preaching, as noted in this Ascension Day sermon by Géorges, catechist at Antimalandy Lutheran Church:

Ny fiakarany any an-danitra dia famporishiana antsika mba hino an’i Jesosy ary izany no nahatonga azy niteny tamin’ny mpianatra satra mbola tsy nino ny mpianatra, mbola misalasala ny mpianatra na dia lazaina fa nitsangana tamin’ny maty izy ka dia ny andininy faha 14 anatra noho ny tsy finoan’ny mpianatra ary anatra koa ho velona amin’ny finoana ny mpianatra satra ny asa ataony asa atao amin’ny finoana ka dia izay mino ahy hoy Jesosy, ny asa ataoko no ataony koa ary misy famantarana ho porofo fa miaraka amin’ny mpianatra Jesosy dia ny famantarana izay asehony ny fiarahany amin’ny mpianatra eto an-tany na amin’ny fomba hita maso amin’ny maha Andriamanitra azy dia ny famantarana amin’ny fanoahana demonia izay anehoany fa ny fanjakan’Andriamanitra izay aoriny dia mandrava ny fanjakan’ny ratsy ka dia misy ny fandroahana, misy ny fanesorana ny fanjakan’ny satana.

Ka dia izay ny baiko nomena ny mpianatra: avoahy ny demonia, atsangano ny maty, diaovy ny boka, famantarana lehibe fa ny Tompo no manao ny asa na dia ny mpianatra no manao ny misa koa dia voavoka ny asan’ny ratsy rehetra, miafa ny fanahy maloto ao anatin’ny olona, miafa ny fanahy osa ao ampon’ny olona noho ilay Andriamanitra niasa ka ao amin’ny mpianatra araka ny teny, indro aho momba anareo mandrakariva ambara-pahatongan’ny fahataperan’izao tontolo izao.

The ascension to heaven is the encouragement of us to believe in Jesus and that is what caused him to say to the disciples, because the disciples still didn’t believe, the disciples still hesitated even though it was said that he was raised from the dead and so verse 14 is counsel because of the disbelief of the disciples and counsel for the disciples to be living in the faith because the work they do is work in faith and so, “He who believes in me,” says Jesus, “the work I do he will do also” and there are signs for proof that Jesus goes along with the disciples, that is signs by which he shows that he goes along with the disciples here on earth in a way which what makes him God can be seen. Signs as the exorcism of demons which show the kingdom of God which here after destroys the kingdom of evil and so there is exorcism, the removal of the kingdom of Satan.

And so this is the command given to the disciples: drive out demons, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, [these are] great signs that it is the Lord who does the work even if the disciples perform it and so all the work of evil is driven out, the unclean spirits in people leave, the weak spirits in the hearts of people leave because of this God who works and with the disciples according to those words: “Behold I am with you to the close of the age.”

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23 Géorges, “Ascension Day”. Sermon, Antimalandy, Mahajanga, May 20, 2004, my translation. This quotation demonstrates most clearly the additive, rather than subordinative style, inherent to oral construction. Note the number of co-ordinating conjunctions rather than subordinating ones.
The preacher calls particular attention to the presence of the risen Jesus for the disciple and, ultimately, for those listening: “…there are signs for proof that Jesus goes along with the disciples, that is signs by which he shows that he goes along with the disciples.” Here the preacher re-doubles his point by using a different grammatical construction. This is a specifically oral technique employed to emphasize Christ’s presence and to aid the listener’s memory.

A different preacher, the Rev. Randriatsarafara Jean Gaston, having just reminded his audience of Mark 16:17, further clarifies the theology of Word and presence:

_Teny izay efa mahazatra antsika loatra izany teny izany ary hitantsika miseho sy miharihary eto ny amin’ny asa izay tanterahan’ny mpiandry amin’ireo marary ireo._
_Na dia efa naka ny toerany eo ankavan’any Ray aza dia mbola miseho miharihary amin’ny alalan’ireny mpanompo hirahany ireny ny hery sy fahefana izay nomeny azy, noho izany dia tokony hiorina tsara isika Kristiana eo anatrehan’izao andro niakarana izao._

This word is a word that we are all too familiar with and we see that it shows itself and becomes evident here with the work accomplished by the shepherds among those who are sick. Even though [Jesus] has already taken his place at the right hand of the Father he still shows himself clearly by means of those servants whom he sends with the strength and the authority that he gave them. Because of this then we Christians should be well founded in light of this day of Ascension.24

To this preacher, Jesus is present to the listener through the deeds of power displayed by the _mpiandry_, by Christ’s servants and a paradox is left without particular explanation: Jesus is present to the believer through the Word active in the work of the _mpiandry_ and yet sits at God’s right hand. These paradoxes of absence and presence, ubiquity and localization are addressed homiletically by preaching Christ’s presence as concretized in the work of the _mpiandry_. This paradox of presence shall be considered more closely below. This

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preacher’s concretizing practice is not unique. His localizing of the presence in the persons of the mpiandry or even in those of simple Christians can be demonstrated in another sermon on the Ascension. The Rev. Randrianaivo Jean Chrysostome begins with a question, an interrogative strategy familiar to rhetoricians:

_Inona moa ny fitoriana ny Filazantsara?_

_Betsaka ny olona no rotidrotikin’ny zava-miseho eto amin’izao tontolo izao ary ny tena manimba ny olona dia tsy ny fahasahirananana loatra na ny fahatrana, na ny fahasamihafana eo amin’ny fiaraha-monina fa ny fahotana, ny faharatsiana. Ireo no fototry ny fahoriana eto an-tany, koa naniraka ny mpiandra Jesosy hitondra vonjy, fanafahana ho an’ny olona hanjakany ary izao no antony hitenenan’i Jesosy hoe “Hamoaka demonia…, hametra-tanana amin’ny marary…. Filazantsara ho an’ny voafatotra izany._

What then is the preaching of the Gospel?

There are many people who are gnawed away by the things that appear in this world and what truly destroys people is not so much worries or poverty or the differences among neighbors but sin and evil. These are the roots of suffering on the earth, and so Jesus sent the disciples to carry salvation, freedom for the people he would rule and this then is the reason Jesus says, “[You] will drive out demons… [you] will lay hands on the sick…This is the gospel for the bound.”

Jesus’ sending of the disciples as the sending of the mpiandry is the gospel for the suffering.

In short, the Word working in the mpiandry concretizes Jesus’ presence to the ‘gnawed’ hearts.

Concretizing presence may be accomplished in another way. The Rev. Masitsara Raymond below argues along with the other preachers that every Christian has been granted the power and authority to oppose evil forces. He, too, urges Christians into the fray. His preaching is caught up in the themes of the great _agon_, the great contest between Jesus and the forces of evil. However, this sermon takes a somewhat distinct approach to the paradox of Christ’s presence. Having summarized vss. 17-18, Pastor Masitsara preaches:

Io izany no hafatra napetrak'i Jesosy na ho famantarana ho an'izay mino. Mipetraka ary ny fanontaniana eto ho antsika na ho anao izay tsy mbola nanana izao famantarana napetrak'i Jesosy izao ary izay no mahatonga an'i Jesosy hilaza eto nanome tsiny an'ireo izay tsy mino satrila izay tsy mino tsy mba hanana izao famantarana izao velively. Izay no mahatonga antsika hoe any amidra-mpiandry, hankary amin-drapasy, hanatona toby maro samihafa, tsy any no mahasitrana fa isika rehetra izao, izany hoe lazain 'i Jesosy fa ny Fanahy Masina dia efa ao aminareo hoe Jesosy ary ao anatinareo, ny dikan 'izany na inona na inona rehetra, ny mpandray ny fanasan'ny Tompo rehetra tsy tokony hilomay hanatona ny mpiandry na ny Pasitora na ny Katekisita izao fa afaka miady, afaka manohitra ny fahefana maloto izay ao aminy ary afaka mandroaka ny fanahy maloto izay ao aminy satria samy nomena ny fanahy masina isika rehetra izao, samy nahazo ny Fanahy Masina isika rehetra izao. Fandaminana ny amin'ny hoe anjara ny mpiandry no hamoaka demonia fa izay akory tsy midika fa hoe Kristianina mpandray ny fanasan'ny Tompo aho ka tsy hanohitra fanahy maloto, fa raflatra misy eo amin'ny fiagonana ihany ny hisian ny hoe ambaratongam-pitondrana, fa isika rehetra izao dia efa nomena hery, nomena fahefana, ary alohan'ny nandehanany 'i Jesosy tany an-danitra, tsy sentiny tany an-danitra ireo fahefana ireo fa navelany teto ambonin'ny tany. Ny fiadanako no homeko anareo hoy Jesosy, izany hoe na inona na inona fahefana nananan 'i Jesosy teto dia nomeny antsika rehetra, koa izay mpanara-dia azy na amin'izao fotoana ankehitriny izao ka araka ny voalaza teo, tsy misy Kristiana mpandray ny fanasan'ny Tompo izay tsy handray na tsy hanany izao famantarana napetrak'i Jesosy izao.

This is the message Jesus placed for a sign for those who believe. Therefore, the question rests here for us or for you who still do not have this sign that Jesus placed and it is this that brought Jesus to say here that he gave blame to those who did not believe, those who did not yet have this sign at all. This is what causes us to do what we call “move to shepherds, go to the pastor, approach the various camps,” but it is not there that causes healing but rather that we all, that is to say that Jesus says the Holy Spirit is already here among you, says Jesus, and there inside you. The meaning of this all whatever, all the communing members [trans.: literally, receivers of the Lord’s Supper] should not run to approach the shepherd or the pastor or the catechist but are free to fight, free to oppose the unclean powers there with them and free to drive out unclean spirits there with them because each has been given the Holy Spirit, all of us, each of us has been given the Holy Spirit — all of us! It is only an arrangement that it is the portion of the shepherds to drive out demons but this does not in the least mean that I as a Christian communicant cannot oppose an unclean spirit, for this [arrangement] is only the organization of the church, the existence of the levels of governance. For we all now have been given strength, given authority, and before Jesus ascended into heaven, he did not carry into heaven these authorities.

26 A translation note: This sentence in English ignores the presence in the Malagasy of an uttered, but immaterial word – na – which normally means “or.” Some of the ‘mistakes’ or mis-spoken words are left in the transcription but removed from the translation for clarity. There are other such ‘mistakes’ but these will be left un-marked in my translations unless the issue is more serious and clarity of meaning is lost.
but left them here on the earth. “My peace I give you,” said Jesus. That is, whatever authority Jesus had here he gave to all of us, and so those who are his co-travelers, even today, and according to what was said there, there is not a communicant Christian that will not receive and will not have these signs which Jesus has placed.

This preacher calls each Christian into spiritual warfare, essentially. The contest the believer faces is not represented as a psychological, internalized reality but rather as an external, lived, on-going experience. This unique, stunning image of Christ leaving “authority” behind concretizes Christ’s invisible powers as if they were possessions he could take to heaven in baggage. Authority is not something abstract. Later, towards the end of his sermon, this same preacher uses a different concretization. Now it is “victory” which has become a portable object, left behind by the one who no longer needs it.

Koa enga anie isika rehetra izao mba ho vonona handray izao hafatra apetrak’i Jesosy amintsika izao ka hijoro ho vavolombelona, hanasitrana ny marary, handroaka fanahy maloto mba tsy hisy intsony ny hoe hatahotra fanahy maloto, fa satria efa niakatra any an-danitra Jesosy izay nitondra fandresena, nefa napetraka ho antsika Kristiana manontolo io fandresena io fa tsy nentiny tany ambony tany, ka nomena hery, fahefana, hanitsaka maingoka sy handrava ny herin’ny devoly sy ny herin’ny maizina rehetra isika rehetra izao.

And so may all of us now be ready to receive the message that Jesus places with us now and to stand as witnesses, heal the sick, drive out unclean spirits so that there won’t be any longer those who are afraid of unclean spirits. Because Jesus who carried victory has already ascended into heaven, yet he has left behind for all of us Christians that victory, for he did not carry it away to there above and so we all have been given power, authority, to stamp on scorpions and to destroy the power of the devil and the power of all darkness now.

There is here in this sermon a clear, oral, mnemonic association that echoes Ephesians 4:7-13 where Paul himself, loosely using an image from Psalm 68:18, refers to “captivity” as an object taken captive. This association is further strengthened by the preacher’s call to utilize the gifts of exorcism, healing, etc., from Mark 16:17-18 and the call


28 Masitsara Raymond, “Ascension Day.”
to ministries of varying nature in this Ephesians passage. So, in Ephesians 4:7-13, the call is
to specific ministries such as that of being apostles, prophets, teachers, etc. Ironically, Paul
himself uses Scripture in this loose associative manner, feeling completely free to re-
contextualize the trope for his purposes in communicating with his immediate audience.

But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it
is said, “When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to
his people.” (When it says, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also
descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same one who
ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.) The gifts he gave
were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and
teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of
Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of
God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.  

We will return to the mnemonic associations below in other sermons and when we consider
the use of ohabolana (proverbs). Before leaving the theological and biblical motifs and
moving on to the proverbs, however, we have several more illustrations of how these
preachers concretize very abstract thoughts. One illustration in particular utilizes another
mnemonic association.

The most surprising to me of these abstract concepts, when I first considered these
sermons, was the doctrine of the ubiquity of Christ after the Resurrection and Ascension.
Ubiquity – that is, the presence of the risen Lord with his people in every time and every
place – makes perfect sense to me now after applying an oral hermeneutic to Mark 16:9-20 as
I did in Chapter 3. Ubiquity emerges as an especially important topic to an oral theology.
Therefore, directly and indirectly, many of these sermons deal with this theme. Perhaps the
most imaginative of the illustrations found in these sermons is represented by the following
preacher, the Rev. Loubiens Fidinantena Claudia, who puts the theological question in

very everyday terms: if you needed to find Jesus where would you go? In addition to the
ingenious concretization of the concept of ubiquity note how the preacher makes reference
to, and adapts, Matthew 18:20: “But where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I
among them.” In its original setting in chapter 18, this verse is the culmination of a passage
on reconciliation. For Matthew, Christ’s presence is the peace between the formerly un-
reconciled (cf. Ephesians 2:14). Pastor Claudias, however, has pressed Matthew 18:20 into a
somewhat different service to make his homiletical point about Christ’s ubiquity. He is
pulling on a mnemonic association of categories more consonant with an oral mindset.

Andriamanitra raha nandefa an’i Jesosy tety ambonin’ny tany, Jesosy raha tety
ambonin’ny tany dia nandehandeha araka ny maha olombelona azy, nandehandeha
nitety tany maro, avy ao Jerosalema izy dia nandeha nankany Betania dia nandeha
nankany Galilea, noteteziny io Palestina rehetra rehetra io, noteteziny ary nanaovany
asa. Ny dikan’izany dia izao, rehetra any Galilea Jesosy dia tsy mahita azy ny ao
Jerosalema, rehetra tany Betania Jesosy ka nanangana an’i Lazarosy tamin’ny maty
dia tsy nahita azy ny tany Betlehema na ny tany Galilea na ny toeran-kafo fa izay
nisehoany sy izay nanaovany sa ihany no nahita maso azy ka afaka nandrany tanana,
nikasitanaana azy satria mbola nihoetra amin’ny maha olombelona azy koa Jesosy na
dia Andriamanitra zato isan-jato aza. Fa izao kosa niakatra any an-danitra Jesosy,
izao no dikany: tsy ho an’olon-tokana ihany, tsy ho Andriamanitry ny any Jerosalema
ihany, tsy ho Andriamanitry ny Galilea izay toerana naha-lehibe azy ihany fa izao, ho
Andriamanitr’izao tontolo izao ka na iza na iza no miangona amin’ny anarany dia eo
afivoany izy ary fiasa mahagaga ho an’Andriamanitra izany. ...

Ry havana malala, aza atao tsinontsinona manomboka izao ny fankalazana
an’Andriamanitra amin’ny andro niakarana, fa raha tsy niakatra any an-danitra
Jesosy dia ho njaly isika fa izay manambola ihany handehanana aropilanina ihany
angamba hoe. “Aiza ianao, Jesosy, izao?””Izy izay angamba mety any Paris, andao
isika ho any aminy any fa misy marary ato hostiranina.” “Aiza Jesosy izao ? Ah!
Jesosy izay any Amerika izy izay, ah! Andao isika ho any Amerika any amin’i Jesosy
fa misy tsy salama ato, misy zavatra angatahana aminy ity”. Raha tsy niakatra
Jesosy, angamba izany no mety zavatra niseho saingy izao kosa, niakatra any an-
danitra Jesosy mba tsy ho an’olona irery fa na iza na iza miantsy ny anarany dia ho
tonga izy izay mambaly vavaka ho an’izay miantsy sy mitalaho aminy.

God, when he sent Jesus here on earth, Jesus when he was here on earth, went about
in a human manner, he went about visiting many places. He came from Jerusalem
and went to Bethany then went on to Galilee. He crisscrossed Palestine all over, he
wandered and he did work. The meaning of this is thus: When Jesus was in Galilee
the people in Jerusalem did not see him. When Jesus was in Bethany and raised

132
Lazarus from the dead those in Bethlehem and Galilee or any other place did not see him or what he did but those who saw him with their eyes and could shake his hand, touch him with their hands because Jesus still remained in what made him human even though he was God one hundred percent. On the other hand, Jesus ascended into heaven, this means thus: he is no longer for an individual alone, he is not God of Jerusalem alone, not God of Galilee alone, but God of the entire world and so wherever folk gather in his name there he is in the midst of them\textsuperscript{30} and this is a wondrous work of God. …

Beloved brothers and sisters, do not make light beginning now of celebrating God on Ascension Day, for if Jesus had not ascended to heaven we would have suffered. For those alone who have money go in airplanes. Perhaps they would say, “Where did you go, Jesus?” “Maybe he went to Paris.” “Hey, let’s go to him there for there are sick to be healed.” “Where is Jesus now?” “Ah! Jesus is in America. Ah! Let’s go to America there to Jesus because there are those not well with us here, there is something to ask him for.” If Jesus had not ascended, perhaps that is what would have happened. But now on the other hand, Jesus has ascended to heaven so that he is not only for one person but for whoever calls upon his name then he will come and answer prayer for the one who calls and pleads to him.\textsuperscript{31}

Working in an associative, richly biblically literate context, one can assume that the preacher has made an unconscious, or even conscious citing of Jesus’ visit to Bethany and the raising of Lazarus. If Christ’s presence is the main issue, the reference calls up in metonymic form the story from John’s gospel where Martha says to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died” (John 11:21). The issue of presence and Jesus’ pre-resurrection ‘locality’ is highlighted.

Towards the very end of this sermon, Pastor Claudias makes one more metonymic reference sure to resonate with his audience. This time the reference is not to biblical materials but to a hymn. It is an extremely popular hymn, sung often in most congregations: number 499 in the hymnal published by the Association of Protestant Churches in

\textsuperscript{30} Matthew 18:20

Madagascar *Fiombon’ny Fiagonana Protestanta eto Madagasikara*). First, we hear
the preacher with the relevant, loosely quoted words highlighted in italics:

_Inona ary no atakalontsika an’i Jesosy noho izany? Tsy misy na inona na inona._
Enga anie isika rehetra izay nosavain’i Jesosy làlana nialohavany mialoña tany an-
danitra mba hitanjozotra hanara-dia azy ka na dia mianso sy mikatsaka antsika
isan’andro isan’andro ny herin’ny satana avy any ankavia sy ankavanana eny avy ao
aorianà ampivily ny làlantsika dia iza, Jesosy no mialoha làlana ho ahy sy ho anao.

What then shall we trade for Jesus because of this? There is nothing. Let us all for
whom Jesus cleared the way, having gone before us into heaven so that we can flow
in continuous stream, travel with him. And so even if the power of Satan calls and
searches for us every day coming from the left and right, yes coming from the back to
make us turn our way, then here it is: Jesus it is who goes before for me and for
you.  

His image borrows a quote loosely from the first stanza but with a close enough word
identity to be immediately recognizable. The image evoked in the last stanza of the hymn is
evoked as well at the end of the quotation above. Therefore, the first and last stanzas of the
hymn I reproduce here to show the full impact of the reference. Again, I will place the
relevant memory-triggering words in italics:

_Inona re no hatakaloko
An’i Jesosy Izay mpisoloko?_
Ny zavatra izay ho simba va sy mora levona?
Raha mbola hazoniko ny to,
Ka tsy maty ny jiro ao am-po,
_Jesosy tsy soloako na inona na inona._

O, ry Jesosy Tompo tsara ô!
Aza mamela ny fanahiko
Hisaraka aminao, fa tano aho ho mpanomponao.
Mba velomy ny ftiavako,
Ka tohano ny fandehanako,
Mba hanarahako ny lalana izay nalehanao.

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33 Loubiens Fidinantenaina Claudias, “Ascension Day.”
What shall I exchange
For Jesus who was my replacement?
The things that will rot or are easily destroyed?
If I still grasp the true,
And the light in my heart is not dead,
I will not exchange Jesus for anything.

O, good Lord Jesus!
Do not allow my spirit
To separate from you, but hold on to me for your servant.
Enliven my love,
And support my journey,
So that I follow the road that you have gone.34

The last stanza of the hymn and the last few lines of the quotation from the sermon make clear reference to being on a journey. The hymn was evoked and the message driven home. In an interview with Pastor Claudias, I asked about his use of this particular hymn and the potential use of proverbial material or other well-known phrases. His answer was illuminating:

Izaho matetika rehefa mitory teny dia, mba tsy ho variana ny olona dia tsy vaovao aminy mandrakariva ny zavatra lazaina, izaho izany tsy dia tiako loatra toriteny lavitra ny kontexe ny olona hitoriana, dia izay no mahatonga ahy matetika hoe ny zavatra hain’ny olona eo an-tanana, ny fiteny fampiasan’ny olona no tiako ampiasaina matetika fa tsy toriteny zavatra lavitra be ka hahatonga ny olona milaza hoe “Inona moa izany?”

I often when preaching – so that the people will not be distracted – the things said will not be new to them all the time. I, that is, really do not like sermons that are far away from the context of the people to whom they will be preached. That is what causes me often to use the things people know in their hands, the language used by the people is what I like to use often but not sermons with things that are far away and which cause the people to ask, “Whatever is that?”35

34 Johanesa from Ambato (d. 1914), Hymn 499 in, Fihirana, 167. Emphasis added as noted; my translation. The composer is Malagasy.

Pastor Claudias’ use of the well-known hymn illustrates well what John Miles Foley refers
to as ‘word-power.’ Here the register is a sermon set in a liturgical environment that serves
as the performance arena and the citing of hymn 499 grants the whole sermon a
communicative economy.\footnote{See Chapter 1.}

The Rev. Laha Jean Noël handles the issue of the ubiquity of Christ a bit less
poetically but clearly and directly. His thoughts are also keyed by other biblical allusions
that he makes explicit, again pressing another biblical text into the service of his overall
theme. In the quotation below, the preacher references Matthew 17:20: “He said to [the
disciples], ‘Because of your little faith. For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a
mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, “Move from here to there,” and it will move;
and nothing will be impossible for you.’ ” He uses this text to state that power and presence
are tied together:

\begin{quote}
Na dia nampiakarina any an-danitra aza Jesosy dia mbola niara-niasa tamin 'ireo
mpianatra ihany izy. Jerentsika ilay texe teo fa izao no zavatra nambaran ‘I Jesosy
amin 'ity resaka hoe fiaraha-miasa ity izany: fa izy ireo kosa dia lasa nitory teny eny
tontolo eny ary ny Tompo niara-niasa taminy. Niara-niasa tamin 'ireny mpianatra
ireny ny Tompo tamin'izay fotoana izay. Hitantsika koa ao amin'ny filazantsaran'ny
Matio toko faha 28 ny andininy faha 18 ka hatramin'ny faha 20, eo dia mbola
nirahin'i Jesosy koa ireo mpianatra ireo ary nomeny toky fa homba azy mandra kariva
izy. Raha ny fanirahana ny Fanahy Masina no ambara amin'izany fiaraha-miasa
izany, tsy mahefa na inona na inona ny mpianatra raha tsy tarihin 'ny Fanahy Masina
izy ary tsy maintsy misy vokatra famantarana ny ataony. Velona sy mitombo hatrany
ny fiangonana tarihin'ny Fanahy Masina satria miara-miasa amin 'i Jesosy izay
lohan'ny fiangonana. Manome toky antsika Jesosy amin 'izao androntsika ankehitriny
izao fa miara-miasa amintsika izy. Tsy ireo mpianatra ireo ihany no irahin 'i Jesosy
miasa fa isika rehetra izay manambara ny tenin 'Andriamanitra, mitory ny
filazantsara, olona miara-miasa amintsika eny amin 'ny alalan'ny fanahiny dia ny
Fanahy Masina izay nomeny hitarika ny olona ary tsy ho ela dia hankalaza izany
andro nilatsahan'ny Fanahy Masina izany isika. Raha fehezina izay rehetra nambara
leo izay dia izao: voalazan 'i Jesosy Tompo fa raha manam-pinoana na dia tahaka ny
voatsinampy – izany hoe voantsinampy izany dia zavatra kely, zavatra faran'izay
\end{quote}
Even though Jesus had ascended into heaven he still worked with those disciples. We looked at the text there but now this is the thing that Jesus announced in this conversation concerning working together: for they also went to preach in the world and the Lord worked with them. The Lord worked with them at that time. We see also in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 8, verses 18-20, there Jesus also sent those disciples and promised them that he would be with them forever. If the sending of the Holy Spirit is spoken of in this working together, the disciples are unable to do anything if they are not led by the Holy Spirit and there must be resulting signs of what they do. The church is alive and grows from then on led by the Holy Spirit because it works with Jesus who is the head of the church. Jesus promises us in this our day that he works with us. It is not only those disciples whom Jesus sent to work but all of us who proclaim the Word of God, who preach the gospel, people who work with us by means of his spirit, that is the Holy Spirit which he gave us to lead people and not very long from now we will celebrate that day when the Holy Spirit rained [down upon us]. If we summarize all that was said there it could be like this: the Lord Jesus said if those who believe have faith even as a mustard seed – that is a mustard seed is a very small thing, the very smallest of things – they will accomplish big things. The work of God is believing in Jesus, as it is said in John 6:28-30. Jesus is with us always, and that is what gives fruit to our work today.37

For this preacher, as for the others above, the presence of Christ implies power. The presence of Christ is manifest specifically in proclamation and proclamation leads to effective signs that confirm the authenticity of the Word proclaimed and the credentials, therefore, of the preacher. Pastor Laha says it plainly: “…tsy maintsy misy vokatra famantarana ny ataony” (“…there must be resulting signs of what they do”).

In my interviews with twelve of the first twenty preachers and in a group interview with the SALT students, I asked questions about their understanding of the pericopes for these two holy days. In one of the questions, I asked if the signs of exorcism, healing, glossalalia, and protection from poison and poisonous snakes must accompany preaching, might accompany preaching or were somewhat irrelevant. Of the twelve preachers

responding, none denied the reality of these signs and wonders that accompany preaching or tried to make light of them. All accepted the power and efficacy of the Word preached, especially in the work of exorcism. A majority of them were careful not to say that the signs appear at every preaching event, preferring rather to say that they might appear. So, for example, this statement by the Rev. Randrianaivo Jean Chrysostome demonstrates a view that allows that the signs are not always evident:

Anankiray izany ny fahazoako azy: ny fivoahan’ny demonia moa tsy zavatra constaté foana. Izay aloha izany ny anisany nampiarinarina anay. Dia raha dinohana ny tenin’Andriamanitra dia tsy zavatra hita ohatran’ny taho moa ny manasitrana marary fa ny fantatra fotisy dia ny hoe isaky ny mitory ny tenin’Andriamanitra dia mivoaka ny demonia mia la ny tahaka an’izay. Ka eo anatrehan’izay izany dia tsy voatery hisy manifestation ny fivoahan’ny demonia amin’ny olona anankiray na ny sehatra anankiray fa ny finoana fotisy dia ny hoe isaky ny mitory tenin’Andriamanitra dia mia la, izay izany ny fipetrak’iny teny iny.

I understand this in one way: the removal of the demons is not really something always observed. That, first of all, is among what we were taught. When one considers the Word of God then the healing of the sick is not something seen like before but what only is known is that each time the Word of God is preached then demons go out, they leave like that. And so in light of these things then it is not necessary for there to be a manifestation of the driving out of demons in one person or in one venue but the belief alone is that each time the Word of God is preached they leave. That is the understanding of this word.38

Some of the others I interviewed were more emphatic about the connection between preaching and the signs it produces. The catechist, Georges, for example saw a direct connection between the sermon and the expulsion of demons:

Georges: Miseho ireo rehefa mitranga koa ny asan’ireo devoly, ka tena miseho, hita amin’ny famoahana demonia izany satria ilay famoahana demonia mialoha ny toriteny – tsy maitsy misy toriteny vao mandeha ny famoahana demonia ary dia vokatry ny toriteny no mampisy ny fivoahan’ny demonia.

Interviewer: Ka raha ohatra ka amin’ny alahady tsy misy famoahana demonia, ny toriteny mamoaka demonia ho azy?

Georges: Tena misy!

Interviewer: Ka raha araka ny hevitrao dia ny fanaovana toriteny dia tena azo lazaina tafika masina, tena ady amin’ny devoly?

Georges: Araka ny hevitro, ny fanaovana toriteny, satria Andrimanitra no tena miasa ao amin’ny toriteny, dia misy hery ny toriteny ka tena mandrava ny demonia.

Georges: Those [signs] appear when the work of the devil also happens and they really appear. This is seen in the exorcism of demons because these demon exorcisms before the sermon – there must be a sermon before going into the exorcism of demons and it is the result of the sermon that makes possible the expulsion of the demons.

Interviewer: And so what about on a Sunday when there is no [ritual of] exorcism, the sermon of itself expels the demons?

Georges: That’s really it!

Interviewer: And so according to your thought the doing of the sermon is really, one could say, ‘holy war,’ [trans.: play on words as it also means ‘evangelism’ and this catechist was an evangelist], that is a true battle with the devil?

Georges: By my way of thinking, the doing of the sermon – because it is God who truly works in the sermon, so there is power in the sermon and so it destroys the demons.39

The presiding elder of the Lutheran-related Soatanana Fifohazana, Dada Rajosoa, also directly connected preaching with the expulsion of demons:

Ny toriteny dia famoahana demonia, izany no tena izy, izany oolina hamoahana demonia tsy maintsy hitoriana teny, tsy maintsy hitoriana teny aloha, ary izay oolina tsy mandray toriteny tsy hamoahana demonia, izany ilay fomban’ny fifohazana, fa ny toriteny no famoahana demonia ny tenin’Andriamanitra.

The sermon is the exorcism of demons. That is what it truly is. That person from whom a demon is to be exorcised must have the gospel preached to them, they must have the gospel preached beforehand, and that person who does not receive the sermon is not exorcised of demons. That is the manner of the Awakening; but it is the sermon that is the exorcism of demons, the Word of God.40


The Rev. Rasolonjanahary Rodin Emmanuël put his belief in the efficacy and power of the Word more personally. I had asked him if he, like the others, believed that the Word of God preached was sufficient to drive out demons so that an exorcism ritual was not needed:

_Ekeko izay, izay mihitsy! Izaho zao nanana izany zao dia ny mametraka azy, mihitsy izany zao dia ny mametraka azy amin'ny Tompo, mihitsy izany zao dia ny mametraka azy amin'ny Tompo, tsy voatery hoe raha misy moa ny fahafahana mamatora ny asa sy fampaherezana fandroahana demonia sy ny anina dia atao, tsy mampaninona moa ny manao izany satria zavatra pratique hitako ao anatin'ny baiboly tsinona – fa ny ahy izany ny tena fototry ny zavatra dia izao – ny tenin’Andriamanitra._

I accept that, that’s really it! I have a sick child now, my eldest son is not well and so what I really do is really that: I entrust him to the Lord. It is not necessary, as it is said, to have the freedom to go to the [service of] Work and Strengthening exorcising demons and the like. It doesn’t matter to do that because I have seen something very practical in the Bible that is none other than – [this is] my idea that is the very root of the thing, namely – the Word of God.41

Pastor Rasolonjanahary, like Pastor Claudias above when he noted that he wanted to preach in such a way that his hearers could relate it to what ‘they know in their hands,’42 sees the meaning of the text as evident in his life world. His son is sick: the Word heals. These sermons present no in-depth analysis of the power of the Word as confirmed in the miracles of healing, exorcism, glossalalia and escape from poison. Instead, the preachers hold up each of these examples simply as they are. In most of the sermons, there is no attempt to extrapolate from them examples that, for instance, one need not fear the threat of death by malaria (something that a Western missionary might fear) or harm from physically hostile residents. Poison is poison; further elaboration is unnecessary in application.

The Rev. Raharison, in his Ascension Day sermon, first tells how an evangelist, near death, is prayed for in full view of the non-Christian, mocking neighbors and is miraculously

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42 Claudias, interview, cited above.
returned to health. The story clearly relates to the sign of the laying on of hands for healing in Mark 16:17. He then follows the story with one relating to poison:


When going to do evangelism in the region of Madirovalo there was a person lagging behind among those doing the evangelism – for we were still going by foot then – and together camped next to a water source and prepared the food. This region of Ambatoboeny has a lot of fish, and so the biggest tilapia was the meal at that time. When the meal was ready and those dining were called, then this person showed his ability because they did not know that this fellow was a diviner. Then the prayer was said and everyone ate. When the diviner looked at the person he intended to have choke according to the carrying out of orders which he given regarding the ‘medicine,’ he was surprised because the person [he intended] did not choke. When [the diviner] was encouraged to eat, to eat the portion of rice that was his, where there was no deadly ‘medicine’ at all, to his astonishment, he took just one bite and choked. When he choked those doing evangelism did not hesitate but worked [exorcised him] immediately. When they worked a strong bone of the fish popped out, [the fellow’s] mouth was already full of blood. When the bone was free, the man was able to speak well saying, “your God is truly strong. I put poison in that man’s rice and the disaster came here to me.” That is the sign that Jesus does for his disciples who preaching the

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43 Translation note: *tafika masina* means literally, ‘holy war,’ and is the common word for ‘evangelism.’

44 Translation note: *mpimasy* means literally, “one who makes things holy,” that is one who knows about potions and poisons.
gospel go into this world. This is the way in which Jesus shows that he works with the disciples, he works with the church, he works with the people he sends. Jesus does not change yesterday, today, or ever.45-46

Rather than seek for a story that might provide a dynamic equivalent of the poison in Mark 16:7 (ie. the malaria or the hostility of neighbors cited above), the preacher relates this story by a direct association. So laying on of hands brings healing and disciples specifically doing evangelism are protected from poison.

Once again the preacher uses a verse in metonymic fashion to call up in the minds of his hearers Hebrews 13:1-9. Here the triggers to memory include the concepts of hospitality being an occasion for epiphany, or better angelophany, in verse 2; of God’s protective presence for his co-workers in verse 6; and the imitation of the faith of those who take risks in their roles as evangelist in verse 7.

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. … Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you." So we can say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?" Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings; for it is well for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by regulations about food, which have not benefited those who observe them.47

Stories in an oral culture tend towards the formulaic48 so an encounter between Jesus and a demon in the Gospels has a certain form. One might draw the conclusion that the story

45 Hebrews 13:8
47 Hebrews 13:2, 5-9.
48 See Ong, Orality and Literacy 60-67; Kelber, The Oral and the Written Gospel 44-89.
related by Pastor Raharison also has been repeated in other forms. Here Theologian Raharinomenjanahary Léonie Charline tells a very similar story. It involves an ombiasa (traditional healer similar to the mpimasy in the previous story), an evangelist, a big fish and a fish bone but rather than taking place near Ambatoboeny on the Betsiboka River, this story happens in Morondava to the south and on the coast.

There is a true story about an evangelist in the region of Morondava. He went through the towns preaching the gospel and one Christian youth went with him. A certain medicine man welcomed them into a certain town they were passing by and was very happy to receive them and so he prepared food for them. It was not the Word of God, however, which made this guy happy but that he could compete with these people of God because he had heard of their fame. He gave these guests a house by themselves and there served them the food – a big fish he made for the meal and when he scattered poisonous “medicine" on it then he sent his wife to bring in the guests. The food was set before each. The evangelist prayed before they ate. The young friend of the evangelist choked and so the medicine man was happy in his heart.

49 Women who have been trained similarly to pastors in the Malagasy Lutheran Church are referred to as Teolojiana or Theologian. They cannot preside at sacraments or perform weddings but otherwise are allowed to assume ministerial duties in congregations. Raharinomenjanahary Léonie Charline was one of my homiletics students.

50 Translation: Ombiasa – one who performs different rituals and prescribes traditional medicines for healing.

51 Translation: Ody – general term for a charm or medicine used by ombiasa in their art.
because that was the curse he had placed upon the medicine to kill these people. But this word of God that we have announced especially was what the evangelist had read and he exorcised the demon and prayed for this young man and lay hands on him. Then the broken fish-bone popped out of its own accord from his throat and there was already blood flowing. The [medicine man] was convinced and offered himself to the Lord. Simple is the message here: God protects his people from danger and death and many examples can be taken with that.52

Both versions of this story of contest between an evangelist and a medicine man demonstrate another characteristic of their strongly oral base: they set up a clear struggle between two forces. The description is graphic with blood still in the mouth of the rescued victim. Shades of grey have not been suggested so as to remove and distance the listener from the story. The actions of the exorcist/evangelist are portrayed as heroic and the opponent is forced to concede the greatness of the evangelist’s God. In these sermons as a whole, the audiences are being invited into an on-going struggle that is clearly described as a battle with evil forces, with the demons and Satan.

In contrast to the two poison stories in the sermons just related, the Rev. Laha Jean Noël, does generalize the protection from poison to a protection from general harm in a way that is somewhat inarticulate and incomplete yet clearly an extrapolation from the concrete idea of poison. He states the idea without expanding upon it and without citing an example that might provide a dynamic equivalent. His major concern in bringing up the point is to dissuade his audience from taking the promise of protection from poison as a dare or as an encouraged practice to demonstrate faithfulness.

Occasionally, however, Christians are tempted, saying that Jesus has already said that one can receive serpents and even if one drinks something deadly then it will not have any effect on him, and so we really go and do those things that might result in our death; that is suicide. That is not what Jesus announces here but this sign that nothing that happens to us in our life [will ultimately harm us], in what makes us Christian, if we believe in Jesus because those are the signs that one believes in Jesus.  

For this preacher, as also for several others, the revealing of the power of the Word in signs and wonders is here to comfort Christians; the signs and wonders are not for the aggrandizement of the preacher, exorcist or snake handler. This call to humility and to trust in the unseen workings of God is a move against the otherwise more triumphalistic tone of the sermons. While we look more closely at this issue in the next chapter, it should be noted that none of these sermons deals significantly with the crucifixion of Jesus or with the revelation of God “in the opposites.” That is to say there are few statements that victory might be found in defeat; there is no paradox of presence in absence. The only ‘failures’ among those who would be good Christians are those who wish to show off their faith or make converts by grand and glorious signs, especially those who drink poison wittingly. Of these, there is no homiletical impetus to find ways to rehabilitate them. They have failed to note that the preaching of the Word must come first; that it is the preached Word that acts, liberates and saves and that the signs and wonders that follow are the Word’s residual effect. Ong’s assertion that “oral cultures encourage triumphalism” seems to be born out in the theological sense here as these sermons convey more of a theologically oral disposition.

53 Laha Jean Noël, cited above.
54 Ong, Orality and Literacy 49.
The triumph sounded by Pastor Jean Gaston uses a particularly Malagasy cultural referent: when a member of the family – extended or nuclear – comes into a good position, a good job, or a place of honor, all members of the family may benefit:

*Raha mihevitra izany fiakaran’i Jesosy any an-danitra izany isika dia toy izao no zavatra hoheverintsika voalohany, voninahitra lehibe ho antsika izany fa ny rahalahintsika dia tafiditra amin’ny voninahitra lehibe indrindra araka ny fomba maha-olombelona azy koa, efa nasandratra manokana ny fombantsika.*

If we consider the ascension of Jesus into heaven then this is the thing we will ponder first: this is a great honor for us that our brother has entered into the highest glory in his humanity and so our nature has also specially been raised.55

One fascinating exception to the triumphal tone of these sermons is found in Theologian Ranivomiarana Raharisoa Fanjamalala’s work. When I requested the sermons from the SALT students I also asked that they include 16:9-13 in their consideration for the sermon on the Ascension Day pericope. Specifically, they were asked if there was any significance to the fact that the first person to meet the risen Christ was Mary Magdalene from whom the text recounts seven demons were exorcised. Theologian Fanjamalala took the assignment to heart and in the first five pages of the transcribed sermon she wrestles with an explanation. She recounts the story of Mary Magdalene’s faithfulness through the crucifixion, through the long Sabbath wait and her worry that the cover stone on the grave would not be move-able by the women. All of this she pieces together from the other gospel accounts. She then notes three clear reasons why Jesus first appears to Mary that, according to the divine logic of a *theologia crucis*, would make perfect sense:

...*Ary tsy nahagaga raha tsy nino koa ireo izay nanambaran’i Maria izany fahagagana lehibe izany satria raha teo amin’ny tantara i Maria dia anisan’izay nokilasiana hoe mpanota indrindra, ary izany hoe olona manana demonia fito izany hita tokoa fa noheverina ho toy ny olona adala, very saina; ka eto noho izany toe-

...And it is not surprising if those to whom Mary proclaimed did not believe that great miracle because already in the story Mary is among those classified as great sinners, and that is to say a person with seven demons is truly seen and thought of as like an insane person, [someone who has] lost her mind; and here, because of that circumstance there are a few things that might be the reason that produced this lack of faith. The very first as was just said, a person who is said to be freed from insanity is proclaiming the appearance of a miracle and made that announcement and so it is considered truly like the idle talk of the insane in the face of the death of Jesus because many were crying, mourning and their minds were agitated, not well-calmed and so that pronouncement of Mary’s was considered like the idle talk of the insane. There, too, was the aspect of the community: women were not ‘good-for-their-word’ in the community and so it is possible that that announcement which Mary made did not have its weight at all. There, too, is what might be said to be the lack of weight that the testimony of one witness has but if many people [witnesses] then the announcement can be believed…

Here it is good to emphasize that when Jesus sends people to do the work of preaching then Jesus did away with the discrimination especially there in the community. God does not discriminate on the people to send, whether child or adult or male or female or considered like the insane as was Mary Magdalene and so the Word of God announces, “God chose the foolish to shame the wise…” (1 Cor. 1:27).  

In Western culture, at least that part of Western culture represented in North America of which I am familiar, the demon-possessed are not so readily equated with the mentally ill. It is more likely for demon possession and evil behavior to be equated. In the past, if the etymology of the expression “to be touched in the head,” is any clue, mental illness was actually attributed to God who was conceived of having touched the sufferer’s head with a divine finger. The preacher’s suggestion that a person who has had seven demons was likely mentally unstable at some point and thus an unreliable witness makes perfect sense in her cultural world. It might not occur to a Westerner. The unexpected reversal of representing God as choosing the foolish to shame the wise is a counter-triumphalist move.

Repetition, redundancy or ‘copia’ are hallmarks of an oral style and communication strategy that gives the audience an opportunity to assimilate the new information before the thought has disappeared with the sound. In these sermons lines are delivered and repeated in a new form, with a different grammatical construction and little change in the overall meaning. A short example of this may be found in the Rev. Rakotonomenjanahary Danielson’s sermon:

*Raha jerena ny filazantsara araka ny Marka, ka rehefa niseho tamin’ny 11 lahy izy satria Jodasy tsv teo intsony fa efa maty nomono tena dia izaao, mbola nihanahana ny mpianatra teo ampisakafoanana, nihanahana izy dia io vokatry ny efa latsaka ao anaty saina ny hoe efa tena nalevina, nidina tao anaty fasana tamin’ny ravivato mafy ka dia sarotra ny hino. Noho izany dia nanome tsiny Jesosy, nanome tsiny izy. Ny fanomezan-tsiny dia mahazo lafiny maro teo amin’ny tantara niarahana.*

If the Gospel of Mark is looked at, and so when [Jesus] appeared to the 11 men because Judas was no longer there but had already killed himself then the disciples still could not get their breath there while they were eating, they could not get their breath as the result of the fact that it had entered their minds that he was already buried, he had entered into the tomb in the strong stone masonry and so it was hard to

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57 Ong, *Orality and Literacy* 39-40.
believe. Because of this Jesus blamed them, he blamed them. His giving of blame has many aspects there in the story being followed.\textsuperscript{58}“…Still could not get their breath…still could not get their breath…already buried…entered ino the tomb…Jesus blamed them…he blamed them…His giving of blame…” Like a candle being dipped in wax, each layer is added and strengthens the overall message.

The following, longer excerpt from Theologian Charline’s sermon, expands on the word \textit{fananana} (possession, belongings).

\begin{quote}
\textit{Raha misy zavatra mahasarotiny ny olombelona dia ny zavatra heveriny fa fananany satria izy hono no nisasatra taminy, eny fa ny Kristianina izay mbola tsy resy lahatra amin’ny filazantsara taneraka aza dia tsy mahafoy hizara ny fananany: vola, harena fitaovana soson-kevitra, fampianarana ohatra mba ho an’ny hafa. Jesosy Kristy no filazantsara velona ary izany no apetrany ho andraiikity ny mino Azy ka hampiely izany amin’ny olombelona rehetra, izany no apetrany amintsika efa manana Azy hizara amin’ireo izay mbola tsy manana an’i Jesosy, izany no tena maha hafa an’ity fananana tena Kristianina dia i Jesosy Kristy ity. Fananana sarobidy irina hananan’ny tsirairay Jesosy araka ny iraka hampanaoviny ny mino eran’i zao tontolo izao, fananana tsy maha tia tena fa izay manana Azy dia toa terem-panahy hizara izany amin’ny hafo koa, fananana tsy maha tia tena fa fananana tiana hampitaina ho azo sy ho fananan ny hafo koa izay mbola tsy manana, fananana tena maha mpanankarena ho an’izay manana azy, tsy hoe harena ara-nofo fotsiny ihany fa ny haremp-panahy rehetra ka tiana koa ho an’ireo izay mbola ao anatin’ny fahantrana nohon’ny tsy fananana azy. Ny mahatonga ny olona tsy te hizara ny fananany mantsy amin’ny hafo dia ny fiheverany fa ho ritra koa ireo eo am-pelantanany raha zaraina izany, fa Jesosy Kristy kosa izay tena fananana dia ampy ho an’ny mpizara sy ny hizara, fanomezana ampy ho an’i zao tontolo izao Jesosy Kristy satria ho an’ny tsirairay no nandatsahany ny râny teo ambonin’ny hazo fijaliana hahazoan’ny tsirairay fanelankeloka. Izay tena manana an’i Jesosy Kristy dia tsy tafandry mandry fa satriny ny hizara an’i Jesosy Kristy isan’andro isan’andro. Tsy hifidianana olona, tsy hifidianana sarangan olona, tsy hanavahana n’iza n’iza satria miray aina amin’i Jesosy Kristy tsy mahanaka izy fa tia ny olombelona rehetra hovonjena, hizarany ny fitiavany sy ny fanavotana vitany teo ambonin’ny hazo fijaliana. Manokana ity fananana sarobidy ity dia i Jesosy Kristy satria tsy natao hotehirizina ao amin’ny rindrina efatry ny coffre fort na ny banque na ny trano na ny vala fa natao haely eran’ny vazan-tany efatra, eran’i zao tontolo izao mihitsy mba samy hanana azy ny olona tsirairay. Fananana mahagaga loatra satria fananana maha te hizara,}
\end{quote}

If there is something that makes people difficult to please it is those things that they believe are their possessions because, they think, they exhausted themselves for it. Yes, but Christians who are still not entirely convinced by the gospel do not release their goods for sharing: money, riches, tools, ideas, teaching, for example, for others. Jesus Christ it is who is the living gospel and that [the gospel] he put as a responsibility with those who believe in him and so it must be spread to all people. That [gospel] he placed with us who already have him to share with those who do not have Jesus. That is what really makes different this real Christian possession, that is Jesus Christ – an important possession to be desired that each should have Jesus according to the messenger whom he caused to make believers around the world – a possession which does not make one selfish who has him but compelled by the Spirit to share that with others, too. A possession that does not make one selfish but a possession beloved which causes love to be received and for the possession of the other also who yet does not have [it]. A possession that makes one truly rich for the one that has it. This is not a possession that is simply a dream but all the riches of the Spirit and so for those who are still in poverty because they don’t yet have it. What brings people not to share their possession with others is that they believe that the things they have in hand will dry up if they are shared but Jesus on the other hand, who is the real possession, is enough for the one who shares and the one with whom he is shared. Jesus Christ is a gift for the whole world for each one. He shed his blood there on the cross so that each one would get the forgiveness of sin. He who really has Jesus Christ does not easily sleep but rather is determined to share Jesus Christ every day. There is no choice of person, no choice of the type of person, no discrimination of anyone because of being in one life with Jesus Christ. He does not discriminate but wants that all people be saved, share his love and the redemption he accomplished there on the cross. This special possession is unique which is Jesus Christ because it is not made to be saved within the four walls of a safe or a bank or a house or a corral but has been made to be spread to the four corners of the world, truly around the world, so that each person has it themselves. A possession that is too wondrous because it is a possession that makes one want to share it. A joyous possession carrying peace and which the world cannot take it from one who has it but rather is offered to the whole world that each might have it, too.\(^{59}\)

This copious style, done well in this preceding quotation, might cause more literately trained ears to weary at the repetition and ‘heaviness’ of use. Some less artistic preachers can seem repetitive to the point of boredom for listeners whose ear-training has not come to rely on the speaker’s redundancy to help situate the ideas in memory. I realize now why, for example,

translating sermons into English for visiting Anglophones in Madagascar was such a tedious task. Often I would simply state, “He is repeating himself and there is no different way to translate what he has said in English.” Now I realize I was cheating my listeners out of the fullness of the experience for the redundancy itself was part of the message.

A good teacher of English composition would likely downgrade a student for overuse of proverbial or platitudinous sayings, encouraging that student to be more original in their thought and expression. Romanticism, in Western culture, attacked the commonplaces in favor of originality and precision linked more fully to the new visual dominance in the sensorium. Commonplaces and proverbs, however, give a listener, especially in a primarily oral culture, hooks on which to hang their thoughts. They act, as it were, as recognizable mile markers to help situate the listener in the landscape of the speaker’s ideas. In the sermons already excerpted above we have seen this use of mnemonic association. Here I wish to turn our attention to the proverbs and, if you will, to the proverbial-style use of Scripture.

In the late nineteenth century, missionaries in particular had noted the great fondness for ohabolana – proverbs – among the Malagasy. Writing in The Antananarivo Annual and Madagascar Magazine, J. A. Houlder, a missionary of the London Missionary Society, says:

Like many other peoples the Hova are very fond of proverbs. ... They are brought forward on every occasion. Indeed no palaver at a tribal gathering, no courtier’s address in the palace, no great officer’s harangue to the assembled thousands when the Queen’s word is proclaimed, and no sermon by any one of the many preachers of God’s Word, would be considered complete without them.

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60 Ong, The Presence of the Word 252-253.

61 Hova refers to the Merina people of the central highlands. Hova also refers to the “citizen” class of those same people with nobility designated by andriana and the slave caste known as andevo. While these class distinctions no longer hold any legal connotation, Merina are very aware, even today, of their class. It is less likely today to hear someone generalize the population of Imerina as hova.
Nothing succeeds so well with native bearers as an aptly quoted proverb. They will forgive much in the way of logic, paucity of thought, a bad choice of words, and indistinctness of expression, if what they do get be only served up with a few terse and racy sayings that are already familiar to their ears.62

Houlder misses a very important point in the second paragraph of this quote. It is precisely the use of the proverbs, well placed or well modulated, that makes the address intelligible to listeners in an oral culture. The metaphoric language of proverbs does two things. First, it concretizes an abstraction by relating it to the experience of daily existence. Second, it integrates the listener into the totality of what is known and passed on as knowledge that is only maintained in the on-going conversation.63 Oral culture has no other means of maintaining information. As Lee Haring has stated:

Metaphor in Malgasy thought, according to one of Madagascar's deep thinkers [Siméon Rajaona], is not merely rhetoric to convince persons unable to understand reason. It is reason, because comparison integrates a particular truth into a universal order. "Comparison, for the Malgasy, is not simply a means to make an abstract thought concrete, or to make it more tangible or palpable. More than that, it is an integral part of the notion of moral and philosophical truth."64

In the sermons collected for Ascension Day, only a handful of ohabolana can be found. While this seems strange in a society where everyday speech and the public orations, especially kabary, are replete with proverbs, there may be historical reasons. Much of the preaching found after 1861 in the Protestant churches65 relied heavily upon proverbial material and style leading to what Raison-Jourde describes as a literal war of words that was


63 Ong, Orality and Literacy 33-36.


65 Lutheran mission work began in 1868 with the arrival of the NMS.
thinly disguised as a sermon. The most popular texts to preach on also came not from the New Testament or the Old Testament stories but from the Wisdom literature and Proverbs. Correction of this practice may have influenced how Homiletics was subsequently taught and therefore how proverbial material was valued.

Nevertheless we do find ohabolana in these sermons. Many of the uses are straightforward support for the argument at hand. Pastor Danielson, who was excerpted above, uses an agricultural proverb to support his argument that preaching increases faith:

_Arakaraka ny hitoriana ity filazantsara ity koa anie re olona no manamafy ny finoana e!_ tahaka ny mitsongo anamany ka arakaraka ny angalana ny raviny no hiroboany, izay koa ny finoana, fa “ny finoana tsy miasa maty,” hoy Jakoba, ka raha mararirary ny fiangonana, tsy dia mitombona loatra, be olana isankarazany dia nohon ny tsy fitoriana no hita voalohany indrindra, indrindra ho anay mpandinika, tsy fandehanana mitory.

According to the preaching of this gospel may the faith of people be strengthened also! _Like picking spinach, as the leaves are taken, it will grow larger._ That too is faith but “faith which does not work is dead,” says James. And so if the church is a bit sick, it doesn’t accomplish much. There are many different problems because of the lack of preaching seen at the very first, especially to us who think about it: the lack of going to preach.

The proverb cannot be pushed particularly hard here, as the simile would suggest that preaching is like pruning; that is not what the preacher is suggesting. Rather he is stretching the proverb to mean that frequency of preaching will increase faith. Pastor Danielson’s citation of the biblical book of James, too, is a bit off. He is loosely quoting. Both the James

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66 Raison-Jourde, _Bible et pouvoir à Madagascar_ 565.
67 Raison-Jourde, _Bible et pouvoir à Madagascar_ 565.
68 Pinching the leaves of the anamamy plant causes the plant to send out new leaves that can be harvested later.
69 James 2:26
reference and the proverb are employed to encourage ordinary Christians to engage in preaching.

Just before Pastor Danielson uses this particular proverb he uses a string of proverbs that are commonly found together to support his argument on the ubiquity of Christ. He is not here calling on the simile to support his argument where a Westerner might have anticipated a syllogism, but to draw the hearer into a different logic, the logic that says that what is passed from the ancestors, the compendium of all Malagasy knowledge passed orally from generation to generation, is enough to convince the listener to accept the proposition.

Aiza ary Jesosy amin’izao? Sady eo ankavanana’Andriamanitra izy no eto amintsika, izay no amin’i Jesosy. Misy fitenintsika Malagasy izay mba mahalasa ny saina ihany manao hoe:

_Tsy izay mamirapiratra dia kintana;_  
_Tsy izay rehetra ilain’ny fo dia faritana;_  
_Tsy ny be resaka no manana ny marina;_  
_Tsy ny mitokamonina no miala; ary_  
_Tsy adalan’ny akoho loatra akory ny hitoerany any atsimom-patana fa nohon’ny toeram-boazara;_  
_ka tsy hiady vitana aho fa an’ny any ambony ny fandaharana._

_Jesosy, ry havana, araka izay nolazaiko teo izany dia nasandratra ho avo, nasandratra ho avo, ary vokatry ny fanetren-tenany no nanandratran’Andriamanitra azy._

Where is Jesus now? He is both there at God’s right side and here with us. That is how it is with Jesus. There is a saying among us Malagasy that makes us think:

_Not everything that shines is star;_  
_Not everything the heart needs is marked out;_  
_It is not the talkative one who has the truth;_  
_It is not the one living alone who leaves; and_  
_The chicken is not insane to sit south of the cooking fire because it is the place assigned to it; so_  
_I won’t argue fate because it is arranged above._
Jesus, dear friends, according to what I said there, has been lifted on high, lifted on high, and it is the result of [his] humility that God lifted him up. The preacher’s argument is simple: this paradox of ubiquity cannot be explained; it is just to be accepted. Jesus is both at the right hand of the Father in heaven and with us here to empower us. The chicken sits south of the cooking pot in a traditional Malagasy home because that is the least fortuitous place, the least holy place. Because, according to Malagasy custom the corners of the house – and the places in between them – have certain astrological meanings, the northeast corner is the place of the ancestors, the place of honor. The southwest corner, then, is the lowest place and can afford to be sullied by the chicken’s excrement. The chicken cannot argue its fate and therefore we should not argue Christ’s fate (to be in two places at once) even, as the preacher goes on, though he deserves it for his humility. Interestingly, a Malagasy informant told me upon reading this sermon that this proverb in particular was a bit ‘dangerous’ for the preacher to use as it would key up another Malagasy proverb, “Aza miady vintana amin’ny akoho” (Do not fight to have the luck of the chicken). A chicken being carried to market is often carried in a basket placed on the merchant’s head and therefore seemingly above everyone else. Of course, he is being sold to be eaten – hardly good fortune!

Dada Rajosoa, the oldest of the preachers sampled, used the proverbs in a manner that seemed more seamless to the arguments. The pictures the proverbs paint are vivid. Speaking of a rich person living in a palace whom most, including that person him- or herself, would consider “at ease” or care free, Dada Rajosoa says,

71 Rakotonomenjanahary Danielson, “Ascension Day.”
72 Ravelojaona Olivier, personal conversation, Saskatoon, August 26, 2009.
Ianao izay ao amin’ny lapa be dia afaka mamongotra ny fahafatesana ary ny fanjanakan’ny devoly noho ny finoana. Koa mitondra ny filazantsara ho an’izay olona mihevitra fa efa miadana izy. Izy no miadan-dratsy sahala ny boka mitery; mitery ny boka, misotro ronono nefà ny vavany tsy afaka. Miadan-dratsy sahala amin’ny boka mitery ny olombelona izay afa-po amin’ny lapa be mamirapiratra, tahaka an’ny mpanan-karena niara-belona tamin’ny Lazarosy.

You who are in the great palaces are free to pull up death and the dominion of demons by the roots because of faith. And so he carries the gospel to those who believe themselves already at peace. It is a poor peace like a leper milking. The leper milks, [he would] drink milk but it does not get to his mouth. The person who is self-satisfied in the shining palace too is in a poor peace like the leper milking, like the rich man who was living with Lazarus.73

The Malagasy proverb appears in two reference works as: Miadan-dratsy ohatra ny boka mitery in Rajemisa’s, Rakibolana Malagasy,74 or Miadan-dratsy hoatra ny boka mitery omby in Houlder’s, Ohabolana ou Proverbes Malgaches.75 Both versions essentially translate as “In a poor peace like a leper milking (a cow).” Houlder takes this to mean that because the leper’s hands are slippery, nothing comes of the work. Rajemison notes that it means that although the person is in great distress, they have a sense of ease. Interestingly, the same informant who had read the previous sermon’s proverb and found it keyed somewhat difficultly, took a slightly different approach. The young Malagasy transcriber of the sermon had written “Miadan-dratsy toy ny boka miteny,” which translates as “In a poor peace like a leper speaking.” My informant surmised that the loss of lips due to leprosy was at issue and this was why the leper could not drink.76 Proverbs transmitted orally must be expected to vary. Even Dada Rajosoa had exchanged the word sahala for ohatra, two terms that are essentially equivalent.

74 Rajemisa-Raolison, Rakibolana 653.
75 Houlder, Ohabolana ou proverbes malgaches 174.
76 Ravelojaona Olivier, personal conversation, Saskatoon, August 26, 2009.
Another way to use proverbs is to overturn them or tweak them by a small rearrangement of the words. Once again, Dada Rajosoa has the clearest example of this. He takes one of the most commonly used proverbs and turns it completely upside-down. The proverb is “Ny fanahy no maha-olina” (It is spirit that makes a person). Driving home the point that the gospel is for “every person and the whole person,” he says:

_Tsy ny fanahy ihany no olona fa ny olombelona dia tena sy fanahy, koa tian’Andriamanitra ho sitrana avokoa ny olona manontolo, ka dia ny filazantsara manontolo no hotoriana ho an’ny olona manontolo sy ny olombelona rehetra. Izay no mahatonga antsika handray vahiny, ary izany fandraisam-bahiny izany tsy hahafahan ‘ireo madinika ‘ireo izay tsy inona fa tian’i Jesosy koa ny tena, tsy ny fanahy ihany._

*People are not just spirit* but body and spirit. And so God wants the healing of the whole person, and so the entire gospel will be preached to the entire person and all people. What brings us to receive guests, and that welcome of guests purified by these little ones, is nothing other than that Jesus loves the body, not only the spirit.77

Above I suggested that Scripture functions proverbially in these sermons. Several of these sermons may be found in Appendix 3, making available for the reader a better picture of how the whole fits together in each. Dada Rajosoa’s sermon demonstrates perhaps most clearly how scriptures committed to memory (though not always verbatim!) inform the speech patterns of the preacher and keys the memories of the listeners. Lee Haring has a simple theory regarding the Malagasy use of proverbs that I believe can be transferred here also to the use of Scripture quotations. He writes:

The beautiful, controlled language of the proverb, which by its quotations echoes the many voices of the past, constitutes an implicit theory among Malagasy that reality includes both the authority of the ancestors and the immediacy of the speaking event.78

77 Dada Rajosoa, “Ascension Day.”
78 Haring, *Verbal Arts in Madagascar* 66.
We could rephrase the last part of that sentence to read: “…reality includes both the authority of Scripture and the immediacy of the speaking event.”

**Conclusion**

While the very highly stylized, even poetic language of *kabary* is not present in these sermons, they do reflect a clear, oral theological understanding. Christ, the living Word, is represented as being present in the proclamation with power. For the Malagasy, the Word does what it says, freeing people from bondage to the powers of evil and the forces of illness and protecting them from danger. Moreover, the compositional style of these works invites the audience to understand the Gospel by participating in it, not by learning definitions and engaging in distantiating analysis. The Malagasy style invites people to know the Gospel by being absorbed into the totality of reality preached which includes the distant past and presses to the future. The stylistic change in these sermons from the grand oratory of Malagasy culture to a somewhat more prosaic oratory only thinly veils the fact that the underlying oral world view has not changed significantly, if at all: the spoken word has power; the spoken Word empowers.
Chapter 5: The Easter Sermons

In the last chapter, we considered sermons based upon the Longer Ending of Mark’s gospel as the assigned pericope for Ascension Day. In this chapter we turn our attention to the pericope for Easter Sunday in the first year cycle of the Malagasy Lutheran Church’s lectionary: Mark 16:1-7. The same set of preachers is under consideration as was in the previous chapter. In this chapter we shall consider several themes not presented in the last. These include the importance of liturgical setting, the rehearsal of key loci, and the overarching strength of inter-textuality as an oral marker in these sermons.

As is evident from the citation above, the lectionary pericope does not include verse 8 but ends without the women’s fearful departure. Before the preacher even begins to consider the text, a choice has been made by those who established this lectionary in the sixteenth century. The problem of the women’s fear and silence was already too difficult for the church to handle, especially on a high holy day. It is simply, therefore, ignored. A theology of absence on Easter may be too big a pill for the community to swallow. How do you

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1 Houlder, *Ohabolana ou proverbes malgaches* 185. Proverb number 2129. My translation. The sense is that one dies well if one has an expensive tomb.


3 See Frank C. Senn, *Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997) 342, 344-45. Senn describes the historic one-year lectionary, used from the sixteenth century until the new Revised Common Lectionary was developed in the late 1960’s and 1970’s, and on which the lectionary of the Malagasy Lutheran Church was built, as the West’s “remarkable consensus.”
understand a risen Lord who is not returned to his community? How do you celebrate that?
The easier solution is to ignore verse 8 entirely.

In the request to the initial group of preachers participating in this study, special attention to verse 8 was to be paid even though it is not officially a part of the pericope. Only a few paid attention to that verse, as we shall see, and of those who did, all dismissed it or explained it away. Hoping to get Mark 16:8 addressed, students from the Sekoly Ambony Loterana momba ny Teolojia (SALT) were asked to enregister sermons on this text with added emphasis that the students deal with the women’s silence and fear. Those responses will be shared below along with those of the original set of preachers. Once again, the fear and silence described by Mark produced various explanations. Only one student addressed head on what might be described as a theology of absence.

**The Ending at Verse 8**

Of the twenty original participants in this project, only nineteen sermons were produced. One had a registration failure. Among the nineteen, only four addressed the ending of Mark’s gospel at 16:8. When each of the respondents was contacted and instructed on how to record the sermons, he or she was also asked to try to include verse 8 in their overall consideration of the text for the sermon. It is certainly possible that the respondents simply forgot the instructions and so did not include verse 8 in their consideration, especially as the pericope for Easter Day does not include that verse. However, if the respondents prepared their sermons in such manner as they all indicated in a questionnaire supplied them,

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then they all read the pericope in their Bibles as well as in the church’s printed lectionary.\textsuperscript{5} They were not unaware of the verse.

Pastor Randrianandrasana Dieu Donné addresses the verse obliquely. His solution for the problem of the women’s fear and silence is to suggest it was part of a natural confusion and fear in the face of overwhelming good news. He begins speaking in the voice of the young man at the tomb (verse 6):

\begin{quote}

“I know that you are searching for Jesus, the one who was crucified on the cross. Behold, he is no longer here. This is the message he left: go home – go for he is already ahead of you in Galilee, there you shall see him. Then tell Peter and tell his disciples that Jesus is risen from the dead and in Galilee they will see each other.” They were both happy and troubled like the family of a chicken at which feed has been thrown: happy and troubled are those chicks when the chickens are fed, they go around eating and so they turn back and forth there near their mother. That announces the depths of their joy. [They] ran returning and there probably wasn’t any conversation on the way any longer for they really wanted to see the face of Jesus – that was what was foremost in their minds...\textsuperscript{6}
\end{quote}

Confusion and a fear born of overwhelming joy cause the women to run home. There is no hint here of a theology of absence, just a fleeting explanation for the reaction of the women in verse 8. They are simply overwrought by joy like chicks overwhelmed by the sudden appearance of food.

\textsuperscript{5} See sample questionnaire in Appendix 1.

Pastor Rakotoniaina Jean de Dieu solves the problem of the women’s fear and silence by referring it back to the previous verses, especially the young man or angel’s admonition not to be afraid found in verse 6:


If the gospel is considered however, then he does not wish to teach that the empty grave is what brought about faith in the resurrection of Jesus. That’s not it for we see, if we look at the 8th verse in this the 16th chapter of Mark then it is said there even more especially that [they were] afraid, surprised. That is what grieved these who came to the tomb first and that fear is what the angel removed from them and said, “Don’t be afraid.” The empty tomb can be received as a sign, a sign that prepares the disciples for their meeting again with Jesus who will show himself to them according to what is said in the 7th verse in this 16th chapter of Mark. That is, faith is not founded on the vision of the empty tomb but founded on the proclamation of God which he caused the angel to say, “He is risen; he is not here.”

A while later in the same sermon, Pastor Rakotoniaina disregards completely the ending of Mark at verse 8 by saying:

Amin’izay isika efa mahalala ny fifaliana sy ny fahavononana tanteraka no handehanantsika miala ao amin’ny toeran’ny maty, miala amin’ny sehatra rehetra sy ny toerana rehetra misy ny fahafatesana izay tsy misy ny fiaina na tany izay nataon’ireto vehivavy ireto, tsy njanona tao am-pasana rehetra nandre hoe: “tsy ato intsony ilay Tompon’ny fiaiana fa efa nitsangana.” Tsy njanona nandany andro tao fa nihaizakazaka nanambara tany amin’ny hafa.

With that we, who already know the joy and the total readiness, are those who will go, leaving the place of the dead, leaving every stage and every place where death is, where there is no life like that done by these women. They did not stop at the tomb

when they heard “that Lord of life is not here any longer but his already risen.” They
did not stop and waste days there but ran and announced this to the others.\(^8\)

This homiletical interpretation of the ending has more in common with Matthew 28:8 and
Luke 24:8-9 where the women run excitedly back to the disciples to announce the news. In
both Matthew and Luke the resurrection is confirmed by a christophany, an ultimate
demonstration of presence. In John’s gospel Jesus appears to Mary after everyone has
inspected the tomb with some consternation. Interestingly, John describes the head-band that
had held Jesus’ corpse’s mouth shut (John 20:7). If Jesus’ speech is Jesus’ presence, John in
particular emphasizes it by paying particular attention to that kerchief’s neat and folded
position in the tomb.

Pastor Andrianantoandro Léon Fidèle continues the theme of a joy so shocking that it
overwhelms the recipient. He likens the women’s reaction to that of a family asking a doctor
to help them tell a patient that he has won the lottery lest the news startle him to death.

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\(^8\) Rakotoniaina Jean de Dieu, “Easter Day.”
Startling things appear to us believers today, too, however which happened to Mary and the disciples according to Mark chapter 16, the 8th verse here. Mary left and went to run away from the tomb for she was shaking all over and astonished and they had not yet said anything to people because they were afraid. Something that is not according to human experience and thinking had happened. They had seen people raised from the dead by Jesus but they had not seen it if Jesus is the one discussed as raised from the dead and living then they did not see how to calm themselves so they were not satisfied with the word of that angel. They had fallen completely into fear and trembling. This does not say that they didn’t believe but Jesus her lord was still at the point of being in her heart even if he was dead. The suddenness had gripped her, not unlike this one doctor of one with high blood pressure and so when the family of the sick person needed counsel from him they asked, “What is the best manner to say to our loved one, doctor, that he has won a lot of money in the dividing out of the lottery which fell upon the number he had?” The doctor began to work and he made simple conversation with the patient saying, “If you sir were to gain a lot of money in the division of the lottery what would you do?” This friend responded simply saying, “I would give to the doctor the half of it.” And with that he [the doctor] was overcome and fainted. The resurrection of their Lord was a good thing to the women but there is no one who knows the fear and the astonishment except the Lord alone. She knows his voice, especially when it was said he is living. Mary saw the empty tomb, she heard the voice of the angel say, “He is not here but risen,” she heard the command he gave saying, “Go say to his disciples that Jesus has gone ahead of you to Galilee. This announces life but they didn’t have the strength. What is it that happened to the women so that they did not have the strength to say what they saw and heard about the Lord Jesus? It is nothing but that Jesus said, “I will see you again and you will be happy.”

To interpret the silence and fear of the women in verse 8 of Mark’s account, Pastor Andrianantoandro has a plausible psychological explanation but to make that explanation work, he has resorted to conflating the other gospels’ accounts as well. In particular he conflates the Johannine account here, bouncing back and forth between the Markan women

and the Johannine Mary. Even the pronouns become vague: do they refer to the women or to Mary?

None of the other original set of twenty preachers makes any reference at all to the fear and silence in verse 8. The students from the SALT, however, made a more valiant effort. Ten students took up the challenge, though one sermon failed to be properly recorded, leaving nine respondents. Of the nine, six addressed verse 8 in their sermons.

Pastor Fitrangana Rodhlis takes the approach of Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:22-29. He attributes to Mark the intention of demonstrating that God uses the weak and despised to accomplish great things.

However, there too is what is announced in the 8th verse. It also is among the important things. The three women left quickly then fled leaving the grave shaking violently and astonishment unlike any before. [They] trembled then were totally filled with fear and so said nothing to anyone which is seen according to what is said in Holy Scripture. They did not speak to the disciples; they did not speak to Peter but were perhaps simply quiet, it might be said that Mary Magdalene and Salome and Mary the mother of James swallowed the message. The message of the Lord transmitted by the angel did not make it home, the message that held the exchange of meeting times of Jesus with his disciples. That is the last word or the word with which Mark ends his story of the empty tomb and this 8th verse alone is what ends the
gospel of Mark. This is the ending Mark wrote in Holy Scripture for the rest are words that have been forced in that come from a different source… And the next [reason for Mark’s ending of the gospel here] is that these women who did not speak the message, the Lord knows well about them that they are ‘weak furniture’ that could not roll away the Jewish gate of the tomb at all. The Lord knew well about each of them however that which made them weak was precisely why the Lord chose them. If we state this in a different fashion, that weakness and non-importance, having a handicap, unfinished, that is especially why he chose them, he chose them to transmit that rendez-vous he made with his disciples and Peter in Galilee…

There is no further attempt in the sermon to explain how the message was eventually transmitted; rather he uses the point to encourage simple Christians to pick up their duty of preaching the gospel to others. As is true in most of these sermons, the homiletic goal is to encourage Christians to be about evangelism. For this goal, Pastor Fitrangana’s interpretation works well.

Pastor Andriamongolandy picks up a similar theme of God’s purpose for Christians to be evangelists and notes that this fear and silence demonstrated by the women in verse 8 is a problem shared by Christians today. He encourages his listeners to be courageous evangelists in the world and holds up as an example the more famous leaders of the Fifohazana, particularly Volahavana Germaine saying,

Tsarovy fa eto amin’ny tantaran’ny fiagonantsika Malagasy dia tiana ny manamarika fa amin ’ireo Ray aman-drenin’ny fifohazana efatra izay nataon ’i Tompo fitaovana hanokatra ny toby lehibe samihafa dia vevihavina nataon ’ny olona tsinontsinona izany, olona malemy izy, ary voambara aza fa ny iray izay niasa naharitra indrindra dia vevihavina tsy nahay namaky teny sy manoratra akory, nefa tsy nanan-tahotra izy, tsy natao ho vato misakana azy tamin ’ny asa fanompoana ny fanakilasiana sy fiheverana ny vevihavina ho tsinontsinona.

Remember that here in the history of our Malagasy church it is well to emphasize that among those elders of the four awakening [movements] whom the Lord used as tools to establish the different centres there was one woman who was considered as nothing by people, a weak person, and it was said even that the one who worked the longest

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time was a woman who could not read or write at all but she was not have any fear. This classification and consideration of this woman as nothing was not a stumbling block to the work of service.11

The fearlessness of Volahavana Germaine is contrasted to the “weakness” and “defeat” of the women at the tomb. Making the most overtly disparaging comment about the ending of Mark’s gospel at 16:8, this preacher states:

Raha ny marina dia eken ’ny fahavalontsika ny hiafaran ’ny filazantsaran ’i Marka. Hatreo amin ’ny andininy faha 8 izay antsoina ho famaranana fo hy no tena soratr ’i Marka amin ’izany, saingy izao hitan ’ireo mpandinika izay nandika tato aoriana fa tsy tsara ny hampijananana ny tantara ao amin ’izany fahanganinan ’ireo vehivavy ka dia nampidiriny sy nasiany hoe famaranana lava mba ho fanehoana fa tsy nianona eo amin ’ny faharesena sy fahanganinana ny fitsangananany tamin ’ny maty fa tsy maintsy hambara izany. Eo anatrehan ’izany dia manoro sy mampahery antsika tsy hatahotra no kendren ’i Marka amin ’izao filazantsara izao, ary manorona sy mamboly finoana velona sy sahy ao anatintsika satria ny tahotra dia fahavalon ’ny fitoriana ny filazantsara.

If we say the truth, then our enemy [the devil] accepts the ending of the Gospel of Mark here at the 8th verse that is called the Short Ending as the real writing of Mark at that. However what those commentators who came shortly after saw was that it was not good to stop the story there with the silence of these women and so they put in and assigned what is called the Longer Ending in order to show that the resurrection from the dead does not end with defeat and silence but it must be proclaimed. In light of that, Mark intends to point out and strengthen us by means of his gospel not to be afraid and to establish and plant a living faith and daring in us because fear is the enemy of the preaching of the gospel.12

Pastor Andriamongolandy’s reaction is harsh: Mark simply cannot end at verse 8 for it gives the devil too much free play. In his mind, the Longer Ending is a necessary corrective.

Two of the SALT students drew the conclusion the women’s silence was not a function of their disobedience and weakness but rather an indication of their devotion to their duty. Rather than become distracted by conversation with others they might meet on the

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12 Andriamongolandy, “Easter Day.”
road, the three women ran directly to the disciples to announce the good news. Theologian Rasolofoson describes it this way:

_Izay azo tsoahana amin’izany anefà dia izao: ny tsy filazan’ireo vehivavy ireo na inona na inona tamin’ny olona dia azo heverina fà ho ara-dalana ihany ary tsy fahanginana noho ny tahotra no nahatonga azy ireo hangina satria tsy nirahina hanambara tamin’ny olona izy ireo fo amin’ny mpianatra ihany._

That which can be drawn out from this however, is thus: the not speaking of these women to people can be considered acceptable and not silence can be feared which caused them to be silent because they were not sent to announce [the resurrection] to [other] people but to the disciples.

In contrast to all of the above sermons in which the preachers attempt to explain the silence of the women in a way that ultimately gives way to speech or ignores their silence entirely, there is one stunning example of a theology of absence. Raharinomenjanahary Léonie Charline, a woman theologian studying at the SALT, begins her sermon by recounting her own visit to the grave of her youngest daughter. From the outset of the sermon, she has introduced the crisis of absence.

_Izao fihetsika nataon’ireto vehivavy ireto izao dia mampahatsiahy ahy ny nahafatesan’ny zanako faravavy na dia toa zavatra misanohitra aza ny antony nandehananany tany am-pasana. Telo andro taorian’ny nandevenana azy dia lasa teny am-pasana izahay vehivavy, ny reninay, ny rahavavin-dreninay, ny renibenay izahay irai-tampo taminy rehetra; rehea nipetraka teo izahay naharitraritra dia niditra, raha nanontany ny antony tamin’ny renibeko aho dia fara famoziana azy hono no antony nandehananany teny ka matoa tsy niantso hono ny maty tao am-pasana raha maheno ny feonay havany dia midika izany fa tena maty tokoa izy. Marihina aloha fa tsy mpampiasa fomole loatra ny faritra misy anay. Ireto vehivavy ireto koa dia ny finoana fa tena maty ka tsy nitsangana Jesosy no antony nahatongavany eto hanosotra zava-manitra ny faty._

This action that the women took reminds me of the death of my youngest daughter, even if the reason for which they went to the tomb is somewhat opposite. Three days

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14 Rasolofoson. My translation.
after her burial then we women went to the grave: our mother, our aunts, our grandmother, all ‘those of the same womb with her.’ When we had sat their some time then we entered. When I asked my grandmother the reason, the answer, supposedly, was that we went there to make our last parting from her and since the dead did not call from the grave when she heard us, that is, her relatives’ voices, then that meant she was truly dead. It is true that we don’t use formalin in our region. These women also came to the grave for the reason that they believed him truly dead and not risen, that they might annoint the body with oil.15

Later, she reflects on the women at the tomb of Jesus by pointing out the absence and bringing it into a sharper relief.

cross and rose, in order to free people who had expended their entire lives in slavery to the fear of death.\textsuperscript{16}

The preacher does not dwell here in the absence of the risen Christ but instead proclaims Christ risen and fear defeated which, she asserts, leads to bold proclamation. She does not get to that proclamation, however, by explaining away the women’s silence in verse 8. That silence remains and remains unexplained.

**Inter-textuality as an Oral Marker**

If Mark were the only gospel our preachers knew, perhaps the sermons for Easter might have taken on a very different hue. Instead, our preachers have interpreted Mark 16:1-7(8) in light of the three other gospels and the Pauline corpus. While the term ‘inter-textuality’ may seem an oxymoron for an oral medium, it should be used at the level of the meaning of the root word “text,” that is, in Latin, “weaving.” These preachers have woven into the fabric of their sermons details from the other gospels, often without recognizing that the detail in question does not belong to Mark.

In the sermon above by Pastor Andrianantoandro Léon Fidèle, we saw how the Johannine account of Mary’s private revelation has been integrated into the story. Pastor Randriatsarafara Jean Gaston explains the source of the women’s anxiety regarding the tomb as they approach with reference to Matthew’s gospel (Matthew 27:62-66). He says,

\begin{quote}
*Niasa saina izy satria rehetra voalevina ny Tompo dia nasiana vato lehibe teo ary hitantsika fa tsy vitan’ny hoe natao vato lehibe fa ny mpisorona sy ireo mpanoradalana dia nangataka tamin’ny Pilato mba hasiana miaramila koa mba hiambina ny fasana.\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{16}Raharinomenjanahary Léonie Charline, “Easter Day.”
[The women’s] minds were certainly working hard because when the Lord was buried a large stone was placed there and we see also that it wasn’t just that they stopped at a large stone but the priests and those scribes asked Pilate to place soldiers also to guard the tomb.17

Later in the sermon, he conflates the story in John’s gospel of the meeting behind closed doors (John 20:19-20):

Tsia ry havana, misy antony manokana matoa feran’i Jesosy tahaka an’izao nanirahany an’ireto vehivavy ireto: “mandehana lazao fa mialoha anareo any Galilea izy.” Asaina hihaona aty am-piangonana isika fa hoy ny soratra masina “ny vy maharanitra ny vy fa ny tarehin’ny tavan-drahahaly fifampaherezana.”18 Aty no hihaonan’Andriamanitra, hizarany ny fitahiany ary ireo mpianatra ireo rehefa nanaiky izany teny izany dia indro Jesosy tonga aminy tamin’ny trano nihidy, ilay Jesosy velona tsy voafetry ny rindrina tsy voafetry ny elanelana sy ny fotoana ka niditra tao izy ka nizara ny fiadânany.

No, dear friends, there is a special reason for which Jesus limited [his action] like this sending of these women, “go tell that he is going before you to Galilee.” We have been invited to meet here in the church for Holy Scripture says, “Metal sharpens metal but the appearance of the face of a brother mutually strengthens,” Here is where God will meet [us], he will divide out his blessings and these disciples when they accepted that word then behold Jesus came there to them in the locked house, that living Jesus who is not bound by walls, not bound by distances and time and so he entered there and shared his peace.19

The distinctness of each of the four gospels’ witness is not maintained by our preachers as they seek to proclaim the Easter message. It may not be a specifically oral mindset that underlies this reality. Neophyte seminary students are often surprised that only two gospels contain birth narratives for Jesus and those two disagree significantly in detail.

What is of more interest is that it may be that a written medium alone can maintain the separate distinctness of each witness’ contribution to the story as even those deeply familiar


18 Proverbs 27:17 is cited loosely. The actual verse reads, “Ny vy maharanitra ny vy, toy izany, no olona maharanitra ny tarehin’ny sakaizany.” The NRSV translates the verse, “Iron sharpens iron and one person sharpens the wits (note: face) of another.” I have translated the proverb as it is quoted above.

19 Randriatsarafara, “Easter Day.”
with the accounts tend to conflate them. It stands to reason, therefore, that an oral society would tend towards more conflation of accounts. Literacy maintains the distinct character of each witness.

**Rehearsing Key Loci**

Six of the original set of preachers and none of the SALT students specifically referenced the Passover story as related in Exodus, chapters 1-14. These preachers have taken the pains to set the story of the crucifixion and resurrection into the Hebrew narrative of salvation by which it has been understood for centuries. Rehearsing the major stories keeps them alive in memory. Rehearsing them together allows them to be mutually referencing. These two stories are then tied together at their points of intersection.

Pastor Randriatsarafara Jean Gaston ties a second locus to the Exodus story in his sermon. In addition to recounting the events of the Exodus, he recounts the story of Adam and Eve and their fall from grace in Genesis chapter 3. In doing so he sets up the point of comparison between what he calls the Jewish Passover (*Paskan’ny Jiosy*) and the Christian Passover (*Paska Kristianina*). Where the Jewish Passover celebrates freedom from slavery, the Christian Passover celebrates freedom from death that was introduced at the Fall. He says,

*Jesosy nandalo tao am-pasana, nandresy ny fahafatesana ary nanome izany fahafatesana izany ho an’ny olona. “Resiko ny fahafatesana izay azonareo tamin’ny filana nomen ’ny devoly anareo.” Resy ny fahafatesana ka izany Jesosy nitsangana tamin’ny maty izany no atao hoe Paska Kristiana fa tsarovana izany andro izany, nanolorana azy ho an’ny mino, izay ilay atao hoe Paska Kristiana.*

Jesus passed by the grave, conquered death and gave that death to people. “I have conquered the death which you got from the need given you by the devil.” Death is defeated and so that Jesus who is risen from the dead is the one called the Christian
Passover for that day is remembered, it is offered to those who believe, that which is called the Christian Passover.  

Taking these two explanations for the great acts of God in the Exodus and the Resurrection, Pastor Randriatsarafara compares them to the trivial and secular celebrations of the holiday, calling his listeners to a deeper celebration. He exhorts them to take up the task of the women at the tomb and proclaim the gospel.

A first reaction to the comparison of the two Passovers to the current celebration may lead one to believe the pastor’s concern is somewhat trivial, as are many of the contemporary sermons that decry the commercialization of Christmas in North America. On the other hand, Pastor Randriatsarafara has recounted two loci and recounted the Easter story in some detail and with a clarity that will set those stories once again firmly in the minds of his listeners. For an orally based culture, the stories are the point.

A second function of the Exodus story helps the preacher retain the agonistic quality of the story. The preacher is able to keep the conflict inherent in the story clear. God, through Moses, defeated the Egyptians; God in Jesus, defeated death and the devil. While the nomenclature may change – death, devil, Satan – the conflict remains dyadic: a test between God and the enemy. Pastor Jacquis states it thus:

Raha nankalaza ny Paska, fahafahana tamin’ny fanandevozana ara-nofo tany Egypte ny tanak’Israely, nankalaza ny Paska ihany koa isika ankehitriny tamin’ny nitsanganan’i Jesosy Kristy tamin’ny maty fa nahazo fahafahana tamin’ny fanadevozan’i Satana.

If the children of Israel celebrated the Passover, freedom from slavery according to the flesh in Egypt, we too celebrate the Passover today in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead for [we] have received freedom from the slavery of Satan.  

20 Randriatsarafara, “Easter Day.”

Liturgical Setting

The rituals of any community or culture need a constant rehearsal and explanation to remain relevant. In Malagasy kabařy there are often explanations of why what is said is said and why what is done is done. The Christian community also re-establishes its rituals and traditions by constant explanation. In these sermons we find a number of instances of liturgical and community explanation.

Pastor Masitsara Raymond notes that the resurrection of Jesus on the first day of the week is the origin of the Christian tradition of Sunday, as opposed to Saturday, worship.

_Tamin’ny maraina somary nahare tori-teny tamin’ny radio hoe tsy hiankinam-pamonjena hoy izy ny fankalazana ny Paska sy ny tsa fankalazana ny Paska. Tsy hilaza aho hoe fampianaran-diso izany ka hilaza aho hoe ny andro androany izao no andro nahazoantsika fandresena, ary ny andro androany ity no antony hivavahantsika andro Alahady fa tamin’izay tena marina tokoa fa Sabotsy no andro faha 7, andro fitsaharana fa ny Alahady dia andro voalohany amin’ny herinandro. Koa noho izay andro nahazoantsika fandresena izay, noho izay nahazoantsika fifaliana izay dia io andro voalohany io, andro voalohany amin’ny herinandro io no natokana hivavahana amin’i Jesosy…_

This morning I heard a sermon on the radio in which he said that salvation does not depend upon celebrating or not celebrating Easter. I will not say that this is a false teaching but I will say that this day today is the day on which we received victory and this day today is the reason for which we pray on Sundays for at that time it is very true that Saturday is the 7th day, the day of rest but Sunday is the first day of the week. And so, because of that day on which we received victory, because of that [day] on which we received joy, that is the first day of the week, the first day of the week is set apart for worship of Jesus…22

While the radio program may have prompted the remark, the logic of the sermon carries through and the preacher has reinforced the tradition.

Sometimes those traditions are not those of the whole church but of the specific community of faith, as in Dada Rajosoa’s explanation of the Soatanana community rule.


And so because his disciples [belong] to Jesus, he ordered the believers to love one another. This love of Jesus that is stronger than death is what he will love us with. And so it is a great sin before Jesus for the individual disciples not to love each other and so in order to preserve what makes us a disciple of Jesus, what makes us [belong] to Jesus then the ‘awakened’ at Ambatoreny made these seven agreements in the year 1895 led by Dada Rainisoalambo and the very first thing which they accepted was the one true God who gave us his Word, the Bible and so one must study reading in order to be able to read the Word of God, study writing and numbers in order to know the chapter and verse in the Word of God. This Word of God, a known word for that is the word of life. “He who eats me,” says Jesus, “has eternal life.” [John 6:54a] And so because the disciple belongs to Jesus then he/she must be clean, wearing white like the appearance of Jesus to Dada Rainisoalambo on the night of October 14th, 1894 when he said to him, “Throw away completely your charms and all of your divining tools.” And he believed in that and so he repented and through away the idols and then it was God that he worshiped. The house which welcomes Jesus must be clean every day, and much food must be prepared to welcome Jesus, that is those guests who visit each day. Everything which we do we do in the name of Jesus because Jesus is the lord of everything. And finally when [we are dead] then hymns, prayers, sermons are what is done because that one called by the Lord is nowhere if not in the palm of his hand in that exceedingly good place. Those who die are to be buried because the whole world [literally: all the land] belongs to Jesus and all the people
who believe Jesus will raise from the dead on the last day no matter where they are buried.\textsuperscript{23}

Reminding the community of its distinctness, especially against other competing values and beliefs, helps the community cohere.

Dada Josoa’s last point about burial practice is particularly significant as burial custom is extremely important in Malagasy culture. For the peoples of the central highlands of Madagascar burial in a family tomb reflects the community of ancestors which one joins upon death. Indeed, the family survives death when one of its members enters the tomb to be joined to the ancestors.\textsuperscript{24} A single grave in the ground is used only for a temporary resting place while the body decomposes sufficiently to re-inter the skeletal remains in the family tomb. Lavish celebrations called \textit{famadihana} (turnings) are held on significant anniversaries of the death of the loved one or when the deceased appears in a dream and announces that he or she is cold, meaning a need for new shrouds. These celebrations are joyous occasions but the family of the deceased often incurs huge debts. The tomb is opened, the \textit{razana} [ancestor] is removed and rewrapped, paraded around town and a party ensues. As the ancestor is considered something of a god dispensing blessings as a reward for the care provided by the living, the Protestant Christian Church has banned the practice. The Roman Catholic response has been to subsume the ritual into the cult of saints. Because of huge social pressure to continue the practice, the Protestant church often reiterates its opposition. Above we heard it expressed as part of the Soatanana \textit{fifohazana}’s community rule. Other preachers also made reference to the practice and reinforced what is distinctly Christian from a Protestant perspective.


\textsuperscript{24} Bloch, \textit{From Blessing to Violence} 44.
Another example can be found in the sermon by Theologian Rasolofoson. Here the argument turns eisegetical, suggesting that had God wanted special treatment for the dead, God would have made sure that Jesus’ body was properly prepared for burial.

And so according to that the Word of God has something to announce to us for God is not ready to call the righteous but calls sinners to repent, and so the road which we are accustomed to is the one leading to the tomb, seeking blessings, seeking money for this life and so the reason for turning the dead. The ancestors are wrapped specially so that they will bless. And so [I] will explain simply to us, why is that the ancestors are able to bless us if it is that they cannot take care of themselves but you the living are the ones taking care of the ancestors, for they did not care for themselves. Far from it to make nothing of the ancestors! Far from it to make nothing of the ancestors in whom the Malagasy have trusted! No! That is not it at all but what is wished to be announced here before the Word of God which strengthens us and which instructs us in his will then it is clearly announced that it is not the will of God to care for the dead who are already in the tomb and then hope for something for that is considered as not trusting in Jesus in what makes us Christian. What is the major thing in our life is this: we are already residents of the earth and already residents of heaven. We already live that life in heaven while still here on earth and so we can drink greedily the joy that the residents of heaven have already. And so do not put things off but leave the customs that God does not appreciate for if God appreciated that custom of turning
the dead then he would have accepted those women to anoint the body of Jesus with fragrant oils and he would have given you and me permission freely to turn the dead.\textsuperscript{25}

**Conclusion**

The fact that the spoken word continues to form community and re-form that community by attending to memory of those gathered has been highlighted once again in these sermons. Key loci are held up and rehearsed and the distinct liturgical and social traditions of the church are re-stated and reinforced for those gathered.

I have asserted above that inter-textuality is a hallmark of an oral homiletic, as the witnesses’ voices cannot be held distinctly in one’s mind. So it is that all four gospels and the relevant Pauline material have been utilized, sometimes confusing and conflating the stories.

Oral theology can little bear an absent Christ. The medium requires presence and so announces presence. A culture still heavily oral in its orientation to the world and the transmission of knowledge can little conceive let alone abide a theology of absence and yet that is precisely what happened, if, as I believe, Werner Kelber’s\textsuperscript{26} thesis is correct. A similar study of twenty-first century, Western Christian preachers might also reveal a deep discomfort with the brevity of the ending of the Gospel of Mark, its silence and lack of christophany. Reading the commentaries and preaching aids, however, the silence and fear of the women has been emphasized recently. Take for example, an exegetical treatment published in the *Christian Century* in 1994. In the “Living by the Word” column, Patrick J. Willson states the problem thus:

\textsuperscript{25} Rasolofoson. My translation.
\textsuperscript{26} Kelber, *The Oral and the Written Gospel*. 

178
Matthew, Luke and the anonymous authors of the longer and shorter endings understood: this story cannot end here. Mark hinted at the truth in his first verse: “the beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” The story goes on. His story goes on, and so does ours. We proceed with the promise that accompanies our uncertainty.

We live by faith, then precariously balancing between the young man’s promise and the women’s fear and astonishment. We seek ending after ending, only to discover that every ending that we fashion inevitably disappoints us.27

Willson can see and articulate an ambiguous Easter, a theology of absence. These Malagasy Lutheran preachers could not conceive of a proclamation for Easter morning that would leave the question of Christ’s appearance unresolved. The most widely available preaching aid for Malagasy preachers, Mitoria Ny Teny, completely avoids verse 8 and the lack of a christophany.28 The preachers’ implicit theological position is that of a theology of presence.

In Chapter 3, it was noted that the Longer Ending sprang up in the same century as the earliest manuscripts of Mark’s gospel and that ending reasserted an oral theology over Mark’s literate theology. In the twenty-eight sermons surveyed here, the pressure to reassert a theology of presence was indeed strong. Having stated his case in a stark way, Mark’s contemporaries seem to have quickly muted the blow. A similar pressure to that seen in these Malagasy sermons from another primarily oral people can be inferred. One wonders, in fact, if the full impact of Mark’s theological innovation was appreciated by his contemporaries, especially if the very act of preaching would undermine the theological assertion of absence!

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Chapter 6: Western Preaching

The assertion being made in these pages is that there is a difference between a primarily oral theology and a primarily literate theology that extends to the understanding of homiletics. Care was taken in Chapters 4 and 5 to demonstrate from Malagasy sermons the oral nature of their underlying theology. No recordings of sermons by Western preachers similar to those made of the preceding Malagasy sermons have been made by this researcher. Instead we turn to a representative survey of texts prepared for the teaching of Homiletics among Lutherans and others. In particular, we will look at texts from the 19th century to show that at an early stage in the encounter between Western missionaries and the Malagasy, the missionaries were unabashedly literate in their theological approach to preaching. We will also look at several representative sermons from Norway and the United States from the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Homiletic Textbooks

While Mark, in writing his gospel, may have been self-consciously literate in his theological approach, the same cannot be said of the various authors who provided textbooks for aspiring preachers in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Indeed, some were completely unaware of any difference at all between the two media save that one issued from the pen and the other the mouth. Here William G. T. Shedd expounds:

1 Although the proverb is an ancient Latin one, the Malagasy version appears on the front of the National Library and Archives of Madagascar. The English translation is mine.
The extemporaneous sermon must be constructed upon the same general principles of rhetoric and homiletics, with the written sermon, and must be the embodiment and result of the same literary, scientific, and professional culture. The difference between the two species of discourses is merely formal.\(^2\)

Later he continues in a vein that presupposes that writing is the normal and, to the audience for whom he is writing, the preferred means of communication:

A moment’s consideration of the nature and operations of the human mind, of its powers by nature, and its attainments by study, is sufficient to show that the difference between written and unwritten discourse is merely formal, and less strictly formal; is secondary, and highly secondary. The human intellect is full of living powers of various sorts, capable of an awakened and vigorous action, which expresses and embodies itself in literary products, such as the essay, the oration, the poem. But, is there any thing in the nature of these powers, which renders it necessary that they should manifest themselves in one, and only one, way? Is there any thing in the constitution of the human mind that compels it to exhibit the issues of its subtle and mysterious agency, uniformly, and in every instance, by means of the pen? Is there any thing in the intrinsic nature of mental discipline, which forbids its utterance, its clear, full, and powerful utterance, by means of spoken words? Must the contents of the heart, and the intellect, be, of necessity, discharged only by means of the written symbol of thought? Certainly not. If there only be a mind well disciplined, and well stored with the materials of discourse.\(^3\)

Shedd’s observation that oral presentation is as easily learned a medium of communication as written communication demonstrates a remarkable hierarchy in the thinking of his time.

Written expression is more common than oral communication, even preferred! Admittedly, Shedd is here referring to the preparation of an extemporaneous sermon, that is, a prepared sermon preached without a manuscript. His comments are not a philosophical exposition of the merits of one medium above another. What his comments reveal, however, is a high regard for, and assumed preference for, the written.


\(^3\) Shedd, *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology* 222.
Given the number of references found in other homiletic textbooks of the time, A. Vinet’s *Homiletics* seems to have carried significant weight, being referenced in many other manuals of the period. Vinet makes an interesting observation about the de-contextualized nature of sermon preparation that sounds more like a literary issue than one for the oral medium. In discussing perspicuity, he suggests that the preacher, while planning the sermon, put him- or herself in the hearer’s place.\(^4\) What he then describes is the hermeneutical problem engendered by writing: the writer is not present with the audience as he or she writes and so there will be gaps in meaning left by the lack of context. “Let us remember how often a reader detects an equivocal expression in an author, who, after reading it himself the tenth time, did not discover it.”\(^5\) Urging on his would-be preachers in their the effort to close that hermeneutical gap he goes on: The listeners’ “adhesion, their lively assent, their rapid association with us, all, things which are necessary to meet one of the first instincts of eloquence, have been too little felt to be necessary on our part, and it is to be feared that their understandings will not come to seek us in this proud solitude, in which, far from them, we have secluded ourselves.”\(^6\) We do not find here the oral poet’s or the traditional orator’s training in *loci communes*, inculcated by long exposure to a master and to the community’s treasured forms and uses.

Henry Ziegler insists on the need for unity in the sermon. The second chapter of his book is devoted to such unity. He writes:

\(^5\) Vinet, *Homiletics; or, The Theory of Preaching*, 373.
\(^6\) Vinet, *Homiletics; or, The Theory of Preaching*, 374.
Unity, in a discourse, may, therefore, be defined as consisting in such a relation between its several parts, and, also, between the elements of which such parts are composed, as renders the whole reducible to a single proposition.

Vinet says: “Every discourse which possesses unity is reducible to a single proposition. The discourse is the proposition developed; the proposition is the discourse abridged.”

Unity of discourse is not an oral characteristic. Oral arguments are not linear springing from one central thought to a neatly drawn conclusion. Instead an orally based oration or sermon will tend towards the aggregative. The multivalent context of oral performance in an oral culture allows for more than the one sense of the discourse and is better controlled by the exigencies of context. Written communication needs specificity and clarity, thus unity.

The textbooks here considered note that there was a trend beginning in the 19th century towards more extemporaneous preaching, less use of manuscript and written aids. Jacob Fry, for instance, does not discourage this trend but exhorts young preachers to write out their manuscripts nonetheless.

This practice of writing should be kept up for some years, until the preacher has acquired a terse, vigorous, and also graceful style of speech, and until he is able to choose his words and form his sentences without confusion or embarrassment when facing a congregation.

Shortly after this, Fry encourages his student readers to improve their style. In so doing he points out the etymology of the word “style”:


The word Style, being derived from the Latin *stylus*, the pointed pen of metal or bone with which the Romans wrote on their tablets, signifies the manner of writing or expressing thought by means of language.¹⁰

He then goes on to state:

Elegance and correctness of style can be cultivated by continuous reading and study of the best authors. This should not be confined to sermons or religious books, but extends to all departments of literature. But it should be literature whose style is worth acquiring.¹¹

Alexander Luria, the Russian psychologist noted in Chapter 1, states this internalizing of written style for oral expression explicitly:

The rules of written speech, having become sufficiently automatized, begin to be transferred to oral speech. Such a person begins to speak in the same manner that he/she writes.¹²

Fry’s hope for his students’ improvement in style by the use of writing is therefore not unfounded. As we shall see below, this connection between improvement in style and argument with written expression has been around for some time.

James Hoppin also stresses the advantages of writing the sermon in his advice to young preachers. He quotes at length a then well-known professor in American Congregationalist circles by the name of Shepard, giving a lecture in 1857. Shepard says,

We insist, then that we are not to cease following the fathers in a fervid use of the pen, more or less, in connection with preparing for the pulpit. Some of them, doubtless, placed too much reliance on it. Some come under a servile bondage to it. But it does not follow from this that our wisdom consists in throwing it wholly away…The pulpit cannot maintain its moulding efficacy, its ruling position, unless the men thereof are men of the sturdy pen, as well as of the nimble tongue.¹³

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¹⁰ Fry, *Elementary Homiletics* 137-38.

¹¹ Fry, *Elementary Homiletics* 139.


But Hoppin recognizes that there is a concomitant loss when one turns to writing for composition and study. Luria also notes that an over-reliance on internalized, written style turns oral discourse into something wooden:

For such a person, live oral speech may be deprived of elements of intonation and gestures. His/her speech may become hypergrammatical and converted into dead, formal, and grammatically overelaborated speech. It has properties that characterize written speech but seldom seen in live oral speech.\(^{14}\)

In some way Hoppin may have presaged the later discussions in Ong, Havelock and others\(^ {15}\) who note that writing frees the mind for reflection by making retention less necessary. However Hoppin is making the opposite point. Instead, the use of writing as the retention mechanism allows for a speaker to be less commanding of the material. The use of writing, in Hoppin’s mind, may excuse the orator from having a broad and definitive command of acquired knowledge. It becomes a crutch. This is a significant point taken from ancient rhetoricians such as the Roman orator, Cicero (106-43 BCE). The orator (or preacher) is expected to be an expert in as many disciplines as possible. So we read in Cicero’s \textit{De Oratore I}:

\begin{quote}
The memory, too, we must exercise by learning by rote as many passages as we can both of our own authors and others; ... we must also read the poets, study history, read and con [sic] over again and again all the teachers and authors in all the higher arts, and for the sake of the training to be got from it we must praise their merits, explain their meaning, criticize their faults, denounce their errors, and refute their mistakes.\(^ {16}\)
\end{quote}

Ciceronian rhetoric forms an undeniable foundation in most of these textbooks. Some of the authors make oblique references to the great orator while others quote him

\(^{14}\) Luria, \textit{Language and Cognition} 167.
\(^{15}\) The reader is referred to Chapter 1.
extensively. Cicero’s style and form were the bases for Western rhetoric and, by consequence, of Western homiletics. Theodor Christlieb notes, “When Christian preaching arose, it found in existence a classical heathen rhetoric, which had long been fixed in its artificial forms.”\(^\text{17}\) While non-Christian rhetoric was at first rejected by the Church as not suitable, eventually it became impossible for the Church to ignore the power of this rhetoric for its own use.\(^\text{18}\) Christlieb thus affirms that this rhetoric was still in vogue in 19\(^{\text{th}}\) century homiletics.

Given Cicero’s influence on subsequent generations, it is well to turn briefly to his understanding of oratory for in it we discover a very high literacy. Walter Ong has asserted that Cicero was still primarily governed by orality: “Like epic song, a Ciceronian oration was not a rendition of a text, it was an oral performance.”\(^\text{19}\) And again he states, “Cicero did not compose his orations in script before he gave them but wrote down afterwards the texts that we now have.”\(^\text{20}\) Richard Leo Enos, however, respectfully disagrees. Crediting Ong with the theory of the relationship between orality and literacy and building on it, and noting that Ong considers Cicero’s a literate mind, Enos pays closer attention to the compositional methods used by Cicero in preparing for a legal oration. He distinguishes between what Cicero delivered in the law courts orally and the written record he produced after the trial. Enos avers that Cicero understood the distinction between the media and their audiences and so wrote accordingly. His written orations are therefore not attempts at reconstructing


\(^{19}\) Ong, *The Presence of the Word* 57.

\(^{20}\) Ong, *Orality and Literacy* 105. Here Ong cites his previous work, *The Presence of the Word.*
already delivered speeches but rather attempts to preserve the sense of speeches in a form that was readily accessible to an unseen and significantly larger audience. Furthermore, Enos notes that Cicero did indeed use writing as a means of preparing his orations.\textsuperscript{21} Enos follows Torsten Petersson’s observations in his biography of the great orator that Cicero was “always an ardent believer in writing as an aid to speaking” and “seems to have composed and memorized any passages that he would be likely to use.”\textsuperscript{22} Cicero himself seems to make this point in \textit{De Oratore}:

The pen is the best and most effective artist and teacher of speech; and so it well may be, for if a sudden and extempore utterance is far inferior to the product of preparation and reflection, this latter again must certainly yield the palm to diligent and careful writing. For all the topics suggested by art or the natural wit and sagacity of the speaker, which are inherent in the subject of our discourse, naturally and spontaneously occur to us, as we ponder and consider our subject with the unimpeded powers of the mind; and all the thoughts and words, which in the proper places add most brilliance to style, necessarily suggest themselves as we write, and flow to the point of our pen. … And the man who comes to speaking after a long practice of writing brings to the task this further advantage, that even if he speaks on the spur of the moment, still his utterances have all the effect of a written speech…\textsuperscript{23}

So, borrowing from both Petersson and Ong, Enos can state that Cicero’s literate mind assisted him both in the production of his extemporaneous orations and his written orations. Enos presses the point further, showing once again how the mental structures of thought are re-oriented by the technology of writing. He states,


\textsuperscript{22} Torsten Petersson, \textit{Cicero: A Biography} (New York: Biblo and Trannen, 1963), as quoted in Richard Leo Enos, \textit{The Literate Mode of Cicero’s Legal Rhetoric} 33. See also L. P. Wilkinson, \textit{The Cambridge History of Classical Literature}, Vol. 2: Latin Literature ed. W.V. Clausen E.J. Kenney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008): “We know from Quintillian that Cicero normally wrote out before hand the exordium, peroration and the vital passages (which incidentally show special care for rhythm) and learned them by heart, the rest being reconceived in outline only, though apparently he used notes” (250).

\textsuperscript{23} Cicero, \textit{De Oratore Book I} 56-57.
Writing freezes words and makes abstract, analytical thought more accessible. Similarly, stabilizing concepts permits one to ponder highly defined, hypotatic structures and modalities of expression more readily. More importantly, and in reconciliation of the views of Petersson and Ong, combining his study of rhetoric and philosophy permitted [Cicero] to apply such modes of thought through a technology (writing) that fostered abstract thinking.24

From an early point in the history of Western Christianity, with the assimilation of ancient rhetorical tradition – and specifically that of Cicero – the mental structures underpinning homiletics had been, and basically remain, literate. Both the method of delivery and the method of preparation advised in the manuals, as encouraged by Cicero and the ancients, involve the abstraction made possible by a literate mind.

It should be noted that there are textbooks available in Malagasy for neophyte preachers, though I found only four in my searches. Three of them date from the last decade of the 20th century.25 In form and function these authors represent similar advice to the student of preaching as found in 19th and early 20th century authors, albeit in somewhat shorter form and in Malagasy. Two are written by native speakers (Rabenanandrasana, Rakotoarimanana) and one by a long-serving, Malagasy-fluent, Norwegian missionary (Tomren). The last is the most thorough exposition and the most classically written, from a Western perspective, on preaching.

One of the books was published in 1877 by Rabe, a Malagasy pastor with the London Missionary Society.26 This short work (only 15 pages) outlines a much less literate approach to preaching though it appeals to the reader to move in that direction. He knows the culture

24 Enos, The Literate Mode of Cicero’s Legal Rhetoric 34.
26 Rabe, Ny amy ny Toriteny (Imarivolanitra: Ny London Missionary Society, 1877).
of which he is a part and thus the audience he is trying to reach. Laying out what is available to the preacher for material, Rabe begins with all of nature:

*Ny ety an-tany, toy ny zava-maniry – ahitra, anana, hazo, vato, rano, tendrombohitra; ary ny eny an-danitira, masoandro, volana, kintana, rivoitra: ra ha voadinika tsara ireo dia sany mampahazo hevitra avokoa ho eniti-mitori-teny. ... Mr. Pearse, ilay nitori-teny indray andro, nilaza fa niteny taminy ny ahitra sy ny vato tao ala-tranony; ary aoka ny asan'Andriamanitra rehetra hiteny amy ny mpitori-teny, fa tsy ny ahitra sy ny vato hiany.*

That which is on the earth, like growing things – grass, edible plants, trees, stone, water, mountains; and that which is in the heavens, sun, moon, stars, wind: if these are considered well then each will really cause one to have ideas which will help preaching. ... Mr. Pearse, who preached one day, said that the grass and stones outside his house spoke to him; and so let all the works of God speak to the preacher, but not merely the grass and the stones.27

Unlike Cicero and the homileticians above, the call is not for one to be highly educated on a similar model but to see all of creation and all of human interaction as informing the matter of what to preach.28 Rabe will go on to encourage reading and study with good teachers but he knows that his audience is not accustomed to such things. The closest he gets to Zeigler’s call for unity in the sermon is rather an encouragement to read or study with a learned person (*mahay*). Indeed, rather than a sermon being reduced to one sentence as Zeigler and Vinet encouraged above, Rabe suggests that a sentence can spawn many sermons:

*Ary koa, aoka ho fantatsika fa ny sentensa iray avoaky ny hendry dia manokatra hevitra hahitana sermona roa na telo, fa indraindray aza dia tsy mety levona mandrapahafaty.*

And also, let us understand that one sentence given out by the wise produces ideas that will be seen in two or three sermons, but occasionally even it won’t stop being fruitful until death.29

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27 Rabe, *Ny amy ny Toriteny* 4-5.
Rabe recognizes that preaching is different from other oral expression, but what starts out as a commentary on genre, for which one might expect content to prevail, we find manner emphasized. He has heard from the missionaries with whom he worked the expression “pulpit tone” (Feon’ny polipitra) and warns against it. More importantly he adds:

_Tsy mety ny mpitori-teny raha mifararemotra na mifendrofendro tahaka izay te-hitarika ny olona hitomany, fa teny soa mahafaly no lazainy ka aoka ho mirana ny tavany. “Ampifalio! ampifalio ny oloko, hoy ny Andriamanitrareo.” Ary koa tsy mety ny mano feo mitovy tantana na mandrimandry, fa mampatory ny olona izany.  

It is not right if the preacher is cantankerous or puts on a mournful face like those who would lead the people to cry, for joyous good news is what he says and so let his face shine. “Rejoice! Rejoice my people, says your God.” And also it is not right to make the voice on the same level or sleepy for that puts people to sleep.

Rabe is extremely aware of the oral/aural event and the context for preaching more than he is of the logical content or internal sermon structure.

**Some Representative Sermons**

While the above textbooks on preaching written in the 19th and early 20th centuries demonstrate a highly literate approach to preaching, the preceding chapters analyzing Malagasy sermons looked more consciously at their theological emphases rather than at their provenance in terms of their composition. The latest of the sermons represented here is from 1947 and the earliest from 1856. In part this is to demonstrate that the theological understanding of even the earliest missionaries to Madagascar would have taken a literate form. The theology may occasionally have some oral overtones but it is highly literate as

30 Rabe, _Ny amy ny Toriteny_ 11.

31 Rabe, _Ny amy ny Toriteny_ 11.

190
will be demonstrated below. This is not to say, however, that there are not some stunning examples of a more oral theology and compositional method.

We begin with an illustration of a sermon that exhibits a stronger oral theology and compositional method. The sermon is for Easter Sunday and comes from a collection published in 1856. What is striking about the sermon is the author’s incredible use of biblical allusion throughout. Indeed, almost the entire sermon is a re-weaving of texts, sometimes verbatim from the biblical material, often rephrased. The resulting text resounds with a power that comes from common places shared with a biblically literate congregation.

If he had not kept his word and promise, what would have become of our hope of salvation? ‘If he had seen the decomposition, how could he then have been God’s Holy One? If he had not risen, then he had gone to his grave with a lie; but a liar cannot be the Son of God, cannot be a Lord and Savior. If he had not risen, it did not count for much that the blind regained their sight, the limp walked, the leper got cleansed, the dead rose from their stretchers – all other proofs and testimonies had then lost their power, the Jews and the supporters of the Jews were proved right, and Peter with his testimony: “You are Christ, the Son of the living God” had been disgraced, and their hope, that waited for the redemption of Israel, had become ‘wind and weather.’ But now, my brothers and sisters! He strongly proved to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead. He had not become insane when he testified for himself, but those, who wanted to ‘lock up the Lord of God the Father’s honor,’ those who went to Pilate and fetched guards and sealed the stone, they turned insane. The ones who had said: we have seen the Lord, did not become fools, but the one who did not want to believe before he saw, the unbelieving Thomas, became a fool, until he too, conquered, with repentant joy and joyful repentance shouted: ”My Lord and my God!” Peter was not disgraced with the testimony which flesh and blood had not taught him; he was not disgraced, when he raised his voice on Whitsunday in the power of the Spirit and with clear conviction, proclaimed to all the house of Israel, that God had made the One Lord and Christ, the same Jesus as they had crucified and that God rose again, when he had loosened the ties of death, – that day, when the Lord gave him three thousand souls in a catch. No, a dead savior would not have had a spirit with tongues of fire to send to the fishermen from Galilee when they were sitting there quietly waiting for him. A dead savior would not have made them bold, strong, invincible in all dangers and adversities, in the heaviest times of their lives, in the hardest battle of death. It was not a dead savior that Stephen saw, when he saw heaven open and the glory of God and Jesus by the right hand of God. He does not speak of a dead savior, the Lord’s apostle who testifies: “I can accomplish everything
in Christ, who makes me strong” (Phil. 4: 13), who says: “Nobody was with me, everyone left me, but the Lord stood by and strengthened me.” (2 Tim. 4: 16-17)\(^{32}\)

The sermon shows much similarity to the Patristic sermons recorded in antiquity and one wonders how much influence they had on the author. The effect of the entire sermon is rhapsodic.

As noted in Chapter 5, Malagasy preachers on Mark 16:1-7 have tended to conflate accounts from the other three gospels.\(^{33}\) In this sermon, J. P. Berg (1809-1884),\(^{34}\) like his Malagasy counterparts, makes use of Matthew’s gospel by retelling the burial story including the request to Pilate that a guard be placed on the tomb and of John’s gospel by recounting the story of Thomas’ special experience of christophany. Given, however, that the entire sermon is a ‘rhapsode,’ a weaving of biblical texts together, it would be hard to draw too many conclusions from the author’s usage. What is clear, though, is the strong emphasis upon Christ’s presence with the believer. That presence is slightly muted. The believer is urged to focus on Christ above rather than to be quite so aware of Christ’s current nearness. Note in the following that Christ has left each of the places that the believer may enter, though the blessing remains and finally in death the believer rests with Christ:

\(^{32}\) J. P. Berg, “Første Paaskedag: Vort Saligheds haab kunde forst blive og er nu blevet os et fast haab ver herrens Opstandelse fra de Døde,” Prædikener til hver Søm- og Festdag i Aaret af Norske Geistlige, ed. I. A.; Eckhoff Christiansen, E. F. (Christiania: Sar. Dymad., 1856) 227-28. This translation, and all translations from Norwegian in this chapter, are provided by Linda Bårdsen, former missionary in Madagascar with the NMS, with some modifications by myself where she lacked the most appropriate English word or the construction was awkward.

\(^{33}\) See page 165.

\(^{34}\) Johann Peter Berg was the parish pastor at Dybvaag (modern spelling Dypvåg) in Aust Agder, Sørlandet at the time that this sermon was written. He was the son of a parish pastor and trained in Bergen at the Cathedral School. He died in 1884 at the age of 75. See J. B. Halvorsen, Norsk Forfatter-Lexikon 1814-1880: Paa Grundlag af J. E. Krafts og Chr. Langes (Kristiania: Den Norske Forlagsforening, 1885), Google Books. Web. April 8, 2010; Gustav Ludvig Wad, Personalhistorisk Tidsskrift (Kjøbenhavn: I Commission Hos Rudolph Klein, 1885), Google Books. Web. April 8, 2010.
Oh, if I could be moved to give you [Jesus] hand and heart, body and soul, to daily let go of everything else and follow you as a true crusader to the Jerusalem, which is above here; if I daily could penetrate your sweet union more, and by your grace keep on to my crown, so that nobody took it away from me, then I could also say, when the hour of God once tolled: cast off my grave – cast it off in the name of Jesus Christ. I do see that it is dark, but You, the light of the whole world, have, however, laid there; I do see that it is unclean, but still you, O Holy and Innocent, wanted to rest there; I do see that it is narrow, but You, whom God put as an heir of all things, and by whom He also created the world, you have after all slept there! How you have adorned and sanctified this last, poor dwelling of mine here on earth, how you have made it into a dwelling of peace, in which this fragile heart will not be frightened by sorrow, nor tempted by sin, nor deceived by the world; how you have made it into a friendly bedchamber for the tired and troubled, to a place of refuge for the persecuted, to a Bethesda, a house of mercy for all your sick, your troubled ones, your miserable ones! Now, because we have this Easter Day, it can be said: “Blessed are the dead, who died in the Lord!” They are blessed: they rest in the arms of God the Father, and where can I, tired child, rest more safely? They rest by Christ’s heart, and where can you find a softer bed? 

The same collection of sermons from 1856 has a second sermon on the Mark Chapter 16 pericope for Easter Day. J. J. Landberg has a more didactic approach. His quotes and allusions are fewer and he tends towards abstraction. In this sermon he announces Christ’s victory over death but addresses Christ’s presence not so much as a present reality but rather as a heavenly hope. The preacher highlights the hope of victory over death as the current ‘presence.’

Yes, this [resurrection of the dead] is truly our Christian hope, based on the power of the resurrection of Jesus. But it is one thing in a quiet and bright moment, when death seems to be far away from us or has just brushed lightly past us on its light, black wings – it is one thing then to be able to enjoy that bright Christian hope, and even to speak words of comfort to others about the bright rooms to which the Risen One will take his people; it is something else when death is standing on our own threshold, yes, by our own bed, to then seize the hope in the power of the resurrection of Christ; yes, it is something else when death places its cold hand on our chest; it is something else when it takes away from our own heart those who were dear to us and whom we would have liked to wander around with; yes, it is something else when death with its profound, serious speech addresses us directly about the long separation and our tears

are running by the thought of the serious change that death brings about in the existence of a human being, about the secretive places it will lead us to, and what will happen there, until we again dare hope to gather with those that death separates us from. Yes, this is something else, dear friends, for we are by nature selfish and limited beings, that only to a small degree are able to feel others’ pain, but who tremble the more when pain is knocking on our own door; death is however always painful; even if you have a bright hope through Jesus Christ about a joyous resurrection to a new life, the soul cannot leave its cottage without pain; bones can still not be torn from the friend’s chest without being sadly missed during the days of separation; also Jesus cried in the house of mourning (John 11:35)! Then it is a matter of grasping the hope of resurrection in Jesus Christ! Then it is a matter of being able to, with tears on your cheek and pain in your bosom, join in singing the sad—happy Christian song of victory.36

Although it is not a part of the assigned pericope, Mark 16:8 is specifically referenced by Landberg. He uses it to emphasize the loss the women felt but then, equally unsatisfied by the absence inherent in the verse 8 ending, he moves on to describe the Johannine account.

If, as we noted in Chapter 4, a common theme in the Malagasy sermons on Ascension Day (Mark 16:14-20) was that of the ubiquity of Christ, that is, Christ’s real and abiding presence with the believers, the sermon on the same text by C. Wille in the 1858 collection is a study in absence. The preacher begins with a prayer, in which he says,

Yes, Lord Jesus! Draw us to you, draw us through sorrow and joy out of the world that lies in the evil; draw us after you to the heavenly world where you belong, so that we will be strengthened to live and wander down here as those who have their citizenship in heaven, so that one time when time is over and the race is completed, we would meet you with rejoicing in heaven and be revealed with you in the glory you had with the Father, before the foundations of heaven were laid.37

Later he states,


He was taken up into heaven, after having fulfilled the great work of redemption through agony and pain, ignominy and death; in heaven he now is enthroned as our almighty king and loving spokesman, and will as such, after his promise, be with us all days until the end of the world.\footnote{Wille, “Christi Himmelfartsdag: De Troendes Trøst og haab ved Jesu himmelfart,” 320-21.}

The sense of Christ’s presence in this sermon is ambiguous: Christ is present but absent; Christ is enthroned in heaven yet in some undefined way present on earth. Indeed, shortly after this, Wille assures his listeners of Christ’s presence in a manner that makes it clear that Christ’s presence is not immediately expected by his audience – as in the Malagasy sermons. Wille reminds his listeners of the Means of Grace, the ways in which Christ’s presence is mediated:

But even if he is enthroned in heaven – does that mean that he has left his people on earth? Oh no! We do know that “where two or three are gathered in his name, there he is amongst them”; we do know, that he on the very Ascension Day gave his congregation this promise: “Behold! I am with you all days until the end of the world.” “He is close to us,” says the apostle, “in our mouth and our heart, the word of faith that we are preaching.” Yes, he is close to us in his word and in his sacraments, in the baptism where he blesses the small ones and regenerates them to eternal life; in the communion where he serves us the bread of life and refreshes us with the cup of blessing; he is close to us in our prayers where we so safely can put down all our sorrows and worries by the Savior’s faithful bosom.\footnote{Wille, “Christi Himmelfartsdag: De Troendes Trøst og haab ved Jesu himmelfart,” 321-22.}

In the Malagasy sermons, we found a greater sense of immediate, un-mediated presence that reveals itself in deeds of power in daily life, not solely within the liturgical symbols.

Peder Blessing (1829-1882), writing almost 30 years later, produces an Ascension Day sermon where the power and presence of Christ seem even more muted. He quotes verses 17 and 18 of Mark 16:

“In my name they were to force out devils; they were to speak in new tongues; they were to take away snakes, and if they drink poison, it will not hurt them; they were to lay their hands on the sick and they would be healed.” \textit{This is surely pointing to the miracles that were to be performed in the early times of the church as a convincing}
testimony for the truth; but it also points to the battles of a more common and spiritual kind, as all true Christians have to lead, that is against the enemies of the salvation: the devil, the world and their own flesh. Against these enemies, their ascended friend and Lord will know how to defend them. The evil principalities and powers with the devil at the lead are raging, but they accomplish nothing where the Lord in the high heavens commands them to retreat. They are his prisoners; he led them in triumph on Ascension Day by himself, and showed them clearly, to their shame, to the dwellers in heaven.40

The power once available to the followers of Jesus has been transmuted into “battles of a more common and spiritual kind.” Miracles, the displays of power expected to accompany the preaching of the Malagasy, are no longer what Blessing or his listeners expect. And then in an aside, his literate theological position is demonstrated. Speaking of the Holy Spirit as the presence of Christ in the world today, Blessing clarifies:

Just so that he could forever be present to his own, the Lord ascended to heaven; because then he could send the Spirit to stay in the church; but wherever the Spirit is, there are also the Son and the Father; because the three are one. As an idle consideration, it could seem like it would have been better if the Lord had stayed on earth, visibly present in his church.41

Not only was Blessing the General Secretary of the NMS (at age 26), from 1855 until 1864, but he finished his career as the pastor of the Cathedral Church (Domkirke) in Stavanger, the city where the mission is headquartered.42 From 1859 to 1864 Blessing was the first director of the School of Missions (Misjonsskole) in Stavanger. These positions indicate that his theological understandings would have been shared and transmitted to those preparing for mission service in Madagascar. Indeed, among the first class that Blessing

41 Blessing, Prædikener over Kirkeaarets Evangelier 339-40. Emphasis added.
taught were Martinius Borgen, Nils Nilsen and John Engh, three of the earliest missionaries from Norway in Madagascar. In a sermon for Ascension Day entitled, “Jesus decides our fates,” Thorvald Klaveness (1844-1915) utilizes a theology of absence to reassure his uneasy flock. In a note found at the bottom of the sermon text, there is a clarification that the sermon was originally preached on May 31, 1905, three days after the rejection by Crown Prince Gustav (1858-1950), acting as regent for King Oscar II (1829-1907) of Sweden, of the requested change in the Norwegian consular laws which would have given Norway a separate consular service within the Union. The insult that this represented to the Norwegian government was the final blow to the Union of Sweden and Norway and moved Norway to seek and gain independence. There was some concern at the time, however, that there might be military action as a result. The sermon is preached in that context. To his unsettled flock, Klaveness says:

By this it is not said that there will be no troubles. Maybe exactly the troubles you are the most anxious for, and that you most dearly pray to be spared [will come]. In spite of your heartfelt prayers they may come rushing over you and submerge you in never-ending pain. And you are asking: is there any loving God? Is there any Jesus? Do we have any savior in the heavens, when such things can happen?

Yes, friend – just because you have a savior in the heavens, who from his seat up on high sees that this is necessary – for your salvation, this is happening. ‘Hang in there!’ Hang in there with patience and in faith. At the end it will be shown that everything really was to your salvation. You had to be humbled, you had to be broken, you had to be trained and tested. You could not be saved in any other way. By

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this you were saved, saved more and more out of everything that is really evil, saved more and more over into everything that is really good. By that you were drawn to God. By that you grew into a mature and authoritative child of God.46

It is somewhat ironic that Klaveness takes a text that emphasizes Christ’s powerful presence reinstated after the resurrection to address the seeming absence of Christ from his flocks’ current situation. Instead he takes a much different approach than the text itself. Focusing on Mark 16:19 (“So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.”), Klaveness asserts that the ascended Christ is in full control of the world and therefore there is nothing to fear:

Jesus now takes part in the ruling of the world. “I have been given all power in heaven and on earth,” he said just before the ascension. It is unutterably comforting to know this. It is so blessedly safe and secure.

Think – everything that happens to us human beings, comes from Jesus. It is not blind randomness that decides it, nor a capricious fate, nor an iron-hard necessity. No – it is Jesus. He is part of the decision-making. More: he determines the decision.47

Jesus is no longer expected as the powerful worker of miracles confirming the preaching of his zealous followers. Miracles are not expected in any real form. Christ may not be seen in the here and now but he nonetheless remains in control.

H. B. Thorgrimsen of the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, writing and preaching in English, also seems uncomfortable with the inherent powerful presence presented by Mark 16:14-20. His words are attenuated statements of presence in his Ascension Day sermon. Note the italicized phrases below:

But when his Word is preached he [Jesus] not only offers this, but he personally works with it and confirms it “with signs.” These signs are experienced and seen by those that believe. He has established his Kingdom here and gives it growth and victory, although it is militant. The “Communion of saints” is the result; and these

46 Klaveness, Nye Prækener til Alle Kirkeaarets Helligdage 242-43.
“cast out devil,” from their own hearts, at least, and engage in warfare with devils to help other souls, they speak with new tongues, they pray and praise. Pray, “Thy will be done,” among other prayers; also “forgive us our sins,” they acknowledge with humility their sins and him as their only salvation; they speak with new tongues, for this is a new language to Adam’s children. They are stung and poisoned by the serpent, when they sin, but die not, for they are cured by the blood which was shed; literally they could, were their faith strong, perform miracles in his name, and also do so even with weak faith.48

Instead of the strong belief in the protection from poison as a literal demonstration of Christ’s power seen in Ascension Day sermons by the Malagasy preachers, Thorgrimsen allegorizes Mark 16:18. Poison and snakes, for him, refer back to the image of the bronze serpent in Numbers 21:4-9 and the allusion in John 3:14. Where, for the Malagasy, real demons are cast out from the possessed in dramatic battles of the Spirit, Thorgrimsen seems to make the battle psychological, personal and internal.

Leander S. Keyser, Professor of Systematic Theology at Hamma Divinity School, writes his Ascension Day sermon in terms that seem better fit for a seminary lecture. His vocabulary tends towards the academic. For example he says,

Of course, it was not the divine nature that was put under kenosis, for that the Son had in common with the Father and the Spirit; but it was the Person or Ego of the Son, which He had in distinction from the other Persons of the Trinity.49

The sermon is descriptive and defining rather than drawing the congregation into the action. Keyser does state in propositional terms what the Malagasy preachers proclaimed as active


reality, namely: “According to His human terms, Christ had to ascend to heaven and be glorified before He could be ubiquitous.”

Finally we turn to Rolf A. Syrdal, Secretary for Foreign Missions in the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The church body he represents was among those that sent missionaries to Madagascar. In his 1947 Ascension Day sermon, “Hope for All the World,” one wonders if he is offering advice to those missionaries whom he would have supervised:

That Gospel [which is a powerful medium to build the Church of the redeemed] has the power within itself to work that which is pleasing to God. With the man who preaches there is the power of the Holy Spirit that impregnates his witness and makes it effective. God promised His disciples “signs” when He sent them forth. When they went, signs followed with them. His Holy Spirit that was promised was actively present with them in all their work. We often think of these as just supernatural manifestations and powers. God did not mean that His Church is to be built on the spectacular, but that powers will be given as necessary for the building of the Kingdom. He does not throw magic-like signs around with prodigal carelessness, nor does He want them to be used at random by His messengers.

Conclusion

These textbooks on Homiletics produced in the 19th and early 20th centuries demonstrate a highly literate mindset. The authors, whose goal it was to prepare people for excellence in an oral event, could not conceive of their task as something different in kind and medium from that of writing for a literary readership rather than a living assembly. Their heavy reliance on the technology of writing has shaped the consciousness of preachers and orators for two thousand years and this is further evidenced by the growing contemporary understanding of ancient Roman and Greek rhetorical practice as exemplified in Cicero. The literate shaping of the Western mind is so thorough that, for those educated

50 Keyser, In the Redeemer’s Footsteps 216.

for the ministry, it is a largely unquestioned assumption. The North American, Methodist theologian, Tex Sample, has named this assumption of a literate audience as something for clergy to consider in the present day and challenges ministers to become aware that a large section of North American society is traditionally oral, even when they have the ability to read and write. The unreflected assumptions of literacy found among the authors advancing preaching cited above are only now being challenged for the late 20th and early 21st century Western church. The priority of literacy was therefore assumed by those Lutheran missionaries who brought their NMS in 1868. The heavy emphasis upon the preacher’s command of disciplines other than Theology, or even the emphasis upon the need for a command of Systematic Theology, stand in stark contrast to Rabe’s simple attention to the world around him.

The preachers examined above have demonstrated a clear discomfort with a theology of presence that incorporates a more agonistic tone similar to that found in the Malagasy sermons. The battle is not so much external and in the here-and-now, but rather it is internal, in heaven, or in the future. Their sermons reflect a ‘once-removed’ quality of reflection consistent with a literate understanding. They lack the immediate – even urgent – quality of the sermons of an orally based culture.

Several of the preachers examined above would likely have had direct influence over the training or spiritual care of missionaries (Blessing, Keyser, Syrdal, Fry). Thus surely the

52 Sample, Ministry in an Oral Culture: Living with Will Rogers, Uncle Remus & Minnie Pearl.
53 Ziegler, The Preacher: His Relation to the Study and the Pulpit 29.
54 It should be noted that while a case is being made for literacy as a major factor in the preference for a more absence-oriented Christology, other factors, such as scientific skepticism related to miracles, for example, also may inform the reticence of these Western preachers. I am certainly aware that other forces are at play, but literacy is certainly a significant one.
missionaries from both Norway and the United States understood and taught homiletics from this vantage. That the oral synthesis has held out in Malagasy preaching against the literate is a testament to its power and depths in the Malagasy culture.
Even if the dead do not bless [you], will not tears fall [for them]? And even if the living do not believe [your words], will you not proclaim [them] publicly?¹

_Hovalahy mahay kabary – tsy misy tsy vitany._
A male citizen skilled in oration – there is nothing he cannot accomplish.²

**Chapter 7: Breaking Words**

Anyone who has worked cross-culturally knows that what one intends to say and what the other hears are not necessarily the same thing. The symbols of one culture do not easily translate into the symbols of another. This is especially true when oral and literate cultures meet. The Bible is a book, and the concept of what a book is does not necessarily translate across cultural lines. Both sermons and _kabary_ are speeches, but they do not necessarily fulfill the same functions. In this chapter I would like to examine what may or may not be understood by the technologies of reading and writing introduced into the Malagasy culture, first by Muslim Arabs in the 12th century and more recently by Western European missionaries in the 19th century, and what the implications of that might be for Christian theology and especially for an understanding of Malagasy homiletics. I also wish to look at the Malagasy oral art known as _kabary_ to ask how Malagasy cultural logic appropriates and rejects this art for Christian use in preaching.

**Reading as “Breaking Words”**

A specific incident sparked my interest in how a book is perceived differently in different cultures. In February of 2003 I was part of an evaluation team examining of the

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² Haring, _Verbal Arts in Madagascar_ 151.
work of the Malagasy Lutheran Church’s Evangelism Department. In order to effect the evaluation we journeyed to those regions where evangelists were working, including those deep in the countryside. In the village of Ampitaneke we were greeted by most of the residents gathered in the small, ramshackle church. Our arrival drew quite a bit of attention. In this village the Lutheran Church has provided famine relief, a well hand-dug to the depth of 70 meters, a weekly medical clinic, and a basic elementary school. The residents of the village were quick to offer their gratitude, as these were answers to their requests for aid. The tone of the visit was very positive on all sides.

It became immediately apparent that the evangelist had been more successful with women than with men in the village. While this is not unusual in itself, the disproportion was extremely skewed. Of the men who were members of the congregation, both were
literate. Of the men who were present but who had not decided to become Christian, none could read. Amongst women the literacy statistics were less dramatic. I asked the elder men of the village, seeing that they were most enthusiastic about the changes brought by the church to their village, why they themselves have remained outside the church. Their answer startled me: “Our children will be Christian because they will learn to read. It is too late for us; we were deceived by the ancestors and the hazomanga (sacred post used as center of sacrifice). You Christians have the book, but we have the ancestors and the hazomanga.”

What struck me in their answer was their technological emphasis. The book is the Westerner’s technology. The hazomanga is their technology; it is their means of accessing the blessings of God and the ancestors. It is not lost on these elders that the other blessings of health care, food relief, and water are also due in part to the technologies brought by the Westerner, by the westernized and especially by the technology of reading. As men with a sense of self-respect both for their person and for their people, they cannot so easily abandon either their traditions or their ancestors.

The advantages of literacy seem so patently obvious to those of us who are literate that we fail to see how radical the change in worldview and thought is which accompanies

3 Village elder at meeting with residents in Ampitaneke on February 3, 2003. Although delivered in Malagasy, I recorded the statement in English.

4 Françoise Raison-Jourde recounts a similar story from the time of the early London Missionary Society work in Madagascar (1823-1826) in which the missionaries took their students to the grave of a vazimba. (Vazimba were considered the original inhabitants of Imerina who disappeared with the arrival of the Merina. Their graves were considered holy and dangerous places imbued with magical power.) The teachers fearlessly broke the taboos around the grave with the students. Assuming that the students were as illiterate as he was, an elderly man refused to touch a branch cut from a tree near the altar to the vazimba saying, “J’en mourrais, je ne suis pas comme les enfants. Les enfants apprennent le livre.” (“I would die of it; I am not like the children. The children learn about the book.” My translation.) Raison-Jourde cites Jones, Griffits et Canham, Journals, Madagascar B1, 1er avr. 1823 – sept. 1826. Raison-Jourde, Bible et pouvoir à Madagascar 122.
the introduction of reading and writing. The changes which cultures generally habituated to writing and print have undergone have happened over such a long period and with such thoroughness that they are taken for granted today. As Ong, Goody and others have pointed out, it takes a degree of literacy and the technical ability of writing, to begin to understand the syllogism and other forms of western logic. We assume that because “All fish swim. A trout is a fish. Trout swim,” is so patently true, that it would be patently true to anyone. Yet this is a linear form of thought and not necessarily one borne by oral culture.

The missionaries of the London Mission Society (1820) and those who followed them from Norway (NMS, 1868) and the United States (Norwegian Lutheran Church of America, 1888) were deeply convinced of the importance of reading not only for spiritual enlightenment but also for the benefits it brings to education in general and society as well. They came out of an era when great emphasis was being focused on the literary arts. Writing was no longer to be rhetoric visualized, but literature in its own right. Indeed, oral rhetoric transferred to prose was being shunned during the Romantic period and emphasis was being placed upon concise, direct and simple prose. One of Norway’s greatest authors of the nineteenth century, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnsen, was famous for the utter simplicity of his language, the lack of rhetorical flourish.

On the Malagasy side, writing was a known technology but its practitioners were very limited. The *katibo* (scribes) of the Antemoro ethnic group were a specialized cadre of men trained to read and write Arabic script. This was a secretive, rather than an open, practice.

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6 The reader is referred back to Chapter 1, 22-23.
7 Ong, *Orality and Literacy.*
with the *katibo* exercising religious as well as practical powers. Training in *sorabe* (literally: ‘large writing’ or ‘capital letters’) was limited to a few. But their skills were such that the powerful found them useful in transmitting messages and recording material. Early Arab immigrants to the valley of Matitanana on the east coast of Madagascar introduced the practice of writing *sorabe*. The Malagasy word for “writing” itself comes from this introduction, as the primary focus of the writing by these Arabs and Malagasy converts was the copying of the *Sourah* (or in another Arab dialect, *Sourate*), that is, “chapters” of the Qu’ran.8 “Writing” in Malagasy is *soratra*.

Writing, whether for religious or for secular purposes was, as noted above, strictly controlled. *Fady*, or taboos, were and are associated with the *sorabe*. Supernatural power was attributed to these words captured on paper. A variant of the word *soratra*, *soratsy*, in the dialect of the Antemoro, means ‘charm,’ or ‘talisman.’9 Blessings or curses were written on the parchment by the *katibo* and placed on the object to be blessed or cursed.10 Such great power was, and is, felt to be resident in these written pages that at least until the 1970’s woven grass pouches containing parchments inscribed in *sorabe* were hung from the ceilings of a home and venerated by prostration as holy objects, even, Munthe notes, when what the texts recounted were the defeat of their own tribe at the hands of the French in 1659!11

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9 Munthe, *La Tradition arabico-malgache* 42.

10 The reader is referred to the following work for more on the nature of *sorabe* and the dialect of Antemoro. Dahl, *Sorabe: Révelant l’Évolution du Dialecte Antemoro*. Dahl describes the manuscripts written as charms and talismans.

It is of note that writing was primarily understood to perform the function of aide-mémoire\textsuperscript{12} with sorabe being primarily used to copy out sections of Islam’s holy book. The sorabe enabled the preservation of a religious tradition by those now relocated to Madagascar from whatever Arabian homeland they had left. These Muslims also passed their faith to their new neighbors, with some accepting the new faith and many adapting Islam to their own religious systems. The katibo, after learning the Arabic script, began writing in their own language, developing their own orthography. It was suitable enough to enable the preserving of histories, lists of trade and government correspondence.

Andriamampoimerina (c. 1745-1810), Madagascar’s first unifying king from the central highlands known as Imerina, contracted katibo to work in teaching his children to write – especially Damalahy, who later became Radama I (c. 1793-1828) – and also to serve as correspondents for sending messages to the further outposts of his realm.

Radama I learned both the sorabe and Western Latin script and in March of 1823, at the urgings of the missionaries who were eager to have uniform script in which to print Holy Scriptures, he chose the simpler Latin script for the official instructions in his kingdom.\textsuperscript{13}

Protected by taboos, imbued with mystical powers, controlled by the enlightened few and primarily specialized in preserving Islamic texts, sorabe was never very diffused among the people. It did, however, give its practice of copying chapters of the Qu’ran for the label of a new technology: writing. But writing is only half a story. Things written are intended to be read, and that leaves a puzzle. The words that translate “to read” seem a strange combination indeed. “To read,” in Malagasy, is mamaky teny, literally “to break or chop or

\textsuperscript{12} Ong, The Presence of the Word, Ong, Orality and Literacy; Goody, The Interface Between the Written and the Oral.

\textsuperscript{13} Munthe, La Tradition Arabico-Malgache 9.
It would be pleasant to believe that the Malagasy had an intuitive sense that presaged the orality/literacy debate, understanding that shifting words from the world of sound to the world of sight fundamentally changes their nature, indeed shatters them. But I do not think that is the case.

All my Malagasy informants, when asked why these specific words were chosen to define the act of reading, have said essentially the same thing. As noted in Chapter 1, these informants reflect the definition given in the most thorough Malagasy dictionary in print: *Rakibolona* by Régis Rajemisa-Raolison. *Mamaky* means “to chop or break open.” The root word is *vaky*, “broken.” The corresponding noun, *famaky*, means “an axe” or literally, “that with which one chops (wood).” My informants have said it more like this: “You break something open to see what is inside, to understand it better.”

The metaphor of an axe chopping open a wooden block (a book) seems particularly apt in light of the fact that much of the early *sorabe* was felt to have been inscribed by chisel on wood and stone, rather than on paper. Furthermore, Christianity pre-dates Islam and was heavily invested in the production of codices as opposed to scrolls. I would suspect that by the twelfth century, the Qu’ran was more likely to be seen in codex form than in scroll form, and so truly a book would have been the experience of those in the Matitanana.

The elders in Ampitaneka may have made a most appropriate comparison between the Bible and their *hazomanga*. The *hazomanga*, literally “the beautiful or blue tree,” is a post somewhat sculpted, though not elaborately. One would assume that an axe is used in the

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14 Razafintsalama suggests that the root word comes from Sanskrit, *vaka*, meaning “to chant.” For this discussion the reader is referred back to Chapter 1, p. 20, note 46.


process of preparing the post for its sacrificial duties. Moreover, many of the *ody* ("talismans" or "medicines") of traditional religious practice are pieces of wood from various sacred trees infused with *hasina* ("holiness, sacred power") by the *ombiasa* ("traditional healers"). The interpretation of the elders of Ampitaneneke seems to be just.

![Figure 5: Hazomanga in Tongobory, Tulear Province](image)

Pier Larson is particularly interested in how the Malagasy appropriated Christianity from European missionaries and at the same time fit it to meet their own cultural logic.\(^{17}\) Searching for common ground on which to establish their proclamation of the gospel, the LMS missionaries set out early to determine what words could be used to define key Christian concepts, and none was more key than determining what one meant by religion. Initially, Larson points out, the newly baptized Christians who had accepted the teachings of the missionaries were known as *mpino* (believers), yet this had a derogatory sense to the Malagasy of the day. The informal prayer meetings, which were the first services that the missionaries allowed the Malagasy to lead, were immensely popular and responsible for

\(^{17}\) Larson, “‘Capacity and Modes of Thinking’: Intellectual Engagements and Subaltern Hegemony in the Early History of Malagasy Christianity,” 970.
greater enthusiasm among the Malagasy for the new faith. The term for “prayer” is *fivahana* and “one who prays” is a *mpivavaka*. Larson feels that in these prayer services Malagasy found a correspondence to their oral culture. To this day, when one asks if someone is a Christian, one often asks, “Do you pray?” The term, used alone, has come largely to mean the Christian religion. But something happened in the transformation of the missionaries’ concept and the reception by the Malagasy. Larson puts it this way: “The change in nomenclature from ‘believers’ to ‘prayers’ is significant because it suggests a shift from a Euro-mission concept of Christianity as characterized by belief and creed to a more Malagasy one in which the essence of being Christian lay in the nature of what one did.”18

As I have pointed out above, the Malagasy had a concept of what writing and reading meant in their own context. It was, and amongst many non-literates as my Ampitaneky experience demonstrates, it is a concept that understands writing and print to have its own religious signification apart from the meaning of the words on the page. For the missionaries who came to the Great Red Island in the nineteenth century, the book carried meanings as well. It was a symbol of modernity and antiquity, it represented an inherent power to save and when opened, it revealed its secrets to all who would but look. The LMS missionaries, in particular, had been educated in an “academy” set up by the non-conformist churches to train their clergy, usually by apprenticeship.19 Books, more than lectures, would have been their door to wisdom and enlightenment on many fields. Missionaries later in the century collected and categorized the vast number of Malagasy proverbs; they appreciated the wisdom and intelligence represented and passed down orally in this form. They may not

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have understood, however, that these were words whole and “un-broken.” Not confined to the written page, proverbs can be adapted to the situation, varied according to their performance. They bring the past alive in the present performance and so can and, indeed, should, be varied according the need. And they can be misunderstood and/or maligned by those not privy to, or appreciative of, their history and cultural genesis. Missionaries collected them, preserved them in writing and changed them according to their own sense of propriety. The missionaries’ own regard for the importance of reading and writing may have blinded them to just how their teachings were being received. While they were busy attempting to “purify” an oral tradition by committing it to writing, the Malagasy were finding the written word suitable to their cultural logic as well. Just as soratsy were written charms, so the early converts to Christianity found the presence of a book or a shorter piece in print a powerful charm. Larson notes that the printing press was introduced in Madagascar in 1826 and by the 1830’s was producing 20,000 units a year of readable material. By the same token, by 1830, there were roughly 5,000 literate Malagasy.

Larson notes that these early missionaries may have directed the translation of Scripture into Malagasy, but they were not the primary translators. Their students were. As Anna Johnston points out for the context of the southern Cook Islands, native speakers were essential in helping the missionaries translate concepts into the vernacular. At the same


21 Larson, “‘Capacity and Modes of Thinking’: Intellectual Engagements and Subaltern Hegemony in the Early History of Malagasy Christianity,” 990. See also Raison-Jourde, Bible et pouvoir à Madagascar 122.

time, this removed control over the meanings from the missionaries and empowered the
Malagasy in their self-expression of the gospel.

**Faith Comes By…?**

I have examined cursorily above how the missionaries and the Malagasy understood, and in some cases even today understand, the technologies of reading and writing, the book. I would like to turn now to how this appropriation of language may have transformed itself in an astounding way with regards to preaching.

Malagasy are a profoundly oral people. From their earliest encounters, missionaries were struck by how wonderfully talented at speaking the Malagasy were and, in my own experience, remain. After more than 175 years since the introduction of the printing press, there has not developed a significant written literature in Malagasy. There are some poets, but almost no novelists. Recently, one finds an upsurge in the number of “how-to” books on the oral art of *kabary*, and *kabary* is strictly an oral art! It is indicative of something deeper in the culture, however, that oral art remains strong and important, indeed dominant.

Those missionaries’ students may have understood something of the power of speech within their own culture that may also have unwittingly blinded those same missionaries from catching a shift in the nuance of meaning in their translations. One case particularly has struck me as extremely significant: Romans 10:17. In the NRSV that verse reads: “So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.” [ἀρετής ἡ πίστις ἐξ ἀκοῆς, ἡ δὲ ἀκοὴ διὰ ρήματος Χριστοῦ.] In the Malagasy version, the text reads: *Koa ny finoana dia avy amin’ny tori-teny, ary ny tori-teny kosa avy amin’ny tenin’i Kristy.*

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This literally translates into English as: “And faith comes from preaching (or the sermon), and preaching (or the sermon) comes from the word of Christ.” I have checked this with the Roman Catholic translation, which may have used the earlier Protestant translation as a basis, and found the same language. In the most recent translation, the Dikan-teny Iombonana eto Madagasikara (DIEM) I found different language. For tori-teny (sermon or preaching), the translation read hafatra ambara (the message announced). These seem startling translations: here a passive event is turned into an active event! εἰς ἀκοής has the sense of passive listening, of receiving the message. The Malagasy words used emphasize the delivering of the message. The words broken in print are not broken in delivery! The power of the word remains in the speaking of it.

We might stop here, satisfied for the moment that the issue seems resolved in favor of a “mis-translation” of εἰς ἀκοής, only the Malagasy are not the only ones to have made a similar shift from passive to active. No less than Luther himself has made the same shift in his 1545 translation: So kommt der Glaube aus der Predigt, das Predigen aber durch das Wort Gottes, (So faith comes from the sermon, but preaching comes through the word of God).25 This sense of the power of preaching to effect faith may also have undergirded the thinking of these early British missionaries. Even while the KJV from which they did their translating retained the concept of the passivity of listening (“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”), they may have theologically been drawn to Luther and even the Patristic witnesses in giving εἰς ἀκοής an active sense.26 Interestingly


enough, the missionaries of the NMS (1868) would have felt at home with the Malagasy translation as it mirrored their own which was based upon Luther’s: *Så kommer da troen av forkynnelsen, og forkynnelsen ved Kristi ord* (“So faith comes then from proclamation, and proclamation by Christ’s word.”).\(^{27}\)

We are therefore no more able to understand the advent of this particular translation choice by those responsible for the Malagasy Bible of 1835 and its subsequent revisions. It is, perhaps, then more instructive to look back to Malagasy culture and reexamine the place of the spoken word therein in light of the orality/literacy theories of Ong, et al.

“Our children will be Christian; it is too late for us,” the elders of Ampitanke told me. There is something in a book that divides. It is not just the words on the paper, the pages one from another, but also the act of interpretation that necessarily follows the act of reading.

Reading individualizes and pulls the reader away from the group. Ong notes it this way,

> Without literacy man tends to solve problems in terms of what people do or say — in the tradition of the tribe, without much personal analysis. He lives in what anthropologists call a “shame” culture, which institutionalizes public pressures on individuals to ensure conformity to tribal modes of behavior. With literacy, the individual finds it possible to think through a situation more from within his own mind out of his own personal resources and in terms of an objectively analyzed situation which confronts him. He becomes more original and individual, detribalized.\(^{28}\)

Reading changes the parameters of the cultural bond.

Herbert Klem describes how literacy divides society in the areas of Africa that he has studied. He notes that those who learn to read and write are often ostracized from their communities, and, rather than face such ostracism, will give up being functionally literate to

\[\text{\footnotesize\ref{27} Bibelen, (Oslo: Det Norske Bibelselskaps Forlag, 1975). My translation.}\]
\[\text{\footnotesize\ref{28} Ong, The Presence of the Word 134-35.}\]
return to an oral mindset.29 He may as well be commenting on my conversation in Ampitanke when he says:

For an elder to accept the training that comes via the written word, he must leave behind all the advantages conferred by his status, and his ability to spontaneously excel in the verbal arts. If the elder attempts to use the newer and foreign communicative mode, he starts to compete in a game at which the young men will soon become his superior.30

Hence the loss of face and return to the status of a school child may be the first result of the introduction of the technology of reading to the society. There is not only an individuation that takes place in the case of the new reader, but also a social change in the community that is the result of the introduction of the new technology. It is not simply the hearing of the message, in this case, which inculturates; it is the speaking of the message. Power and cultural hegemony belong to those who can speak in the idiom of the people, an idiom shared by the speech community and not fractured by a medium that does not need the presence of the other. Faith, then, could be said to come from the encoding of the message within a speech community. It is not just the hearing of the message that inculturates or, in the theological sense, leads to faith. There must be the message to pass on. One can get locked into the egg and chicken debate, citing that those who form must first be formed, but in the area of community formation – whether a theological community or a cultural community – there must be some primacy to the encoding function. In a community that is primarily oral, it would then make sense that the active, the act of speaking, of preaching in this case, would have primacy over the passivity of listening. After all great leaders are often, if not always, great speakers.


216
Here we must nuance our argument somewhat. Malagasy culture does not emphasize the speaker, but the speaking. Indeed, great pains are taken to ensure that the one speaking does not put himself up or call more than due attention to him or herself.

Malagasy speech patterns use what Elinor Ochs Keenan calls “the idiom of selflessness.” In her doctoral thesis, *Conversation and Oratory in Vakinankaratra*, *Madagascar*, she describes well the effort Malagasy undertake to de-emphasize their person in speech and also their attempts to avoid drawing direct attention to any one individual. Keenan notes linguistic phenomenon such as the avoidance of the personal pronoun suffix – *ko* which is added to nouns as a marker of attribution and to verbs in the passive and relative moods for agency. One speaks about things held in common but rarely refers to personal belongings or relationships. She has even cleared up a bit of a mystery in my own family. I have an adopted Malagasy son who, when speaking about me to his friends, always uses the plural *papanay*, “our poppa,” rather than *papako*, “my poppa.” As my son is an only child, this always seemed strange to me. To be more specific in his identification of me as *his* father would be to *mieboebo* (show pride).

Keenan points out that it is shameful in the eyes of the Vakinankaratra – and my own experience suggests that this goes across the various ethnic groups in Madagascar – to draw attention to oneself or to any individual within a group. Distinctions based upon ability, wealth or education, are played down. Personal feelings and opinions are kept to oneself. It is considered, for example, highly inappropriate for even married couples to make any public display of affection.

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31 Keenan, “Conversation and Oratory,” 86.
32 Keenan, “Conversation and Oratory,” 59.
This gets played out most clearly in the Malagasy oratory mentioned above, \textit{kabary}.

As \textit{kabary} can be clearly related to the act of preaching, both being oratorical arts, \textit{kabary} makes a good point of comparison for examination of what happens when words are “whole” and when they are “broken,” “spoken,” rather than “read.”

Richardson produced the most thorough Malagasy-English dictionary to date, even if it is more than 100 years old. He defines \textit{kabary} as follows:

\textbf{KABARY, s.} A public proclamation, a message from the sovereign or ruler; an assembly convened for public business; business or public speeches; an important matter [Mal. \textit{cabar}, and Ar. \textit{kabar}, news; Swa. \textit{khabari}].

Paying attention, for a moment, to the possible etymology given in this definition, will move us to an interesting \textit{rendez-vous} with the same Matitanana region mentioned in connection with the word \textit{soratra} and the introduction of reading and writing by Arab immigrants. As Keenan points out,\textsuperscript{34} Raymond Kent has postulated that this form of oratory was developed by these same Arab immigrants and their descendants. They moved steadily inland and settled eventually in the central highlands of Madagascar, forming an alliance with the Hova, an ethnic group of primarily Indonesian origin. Kent suggests that these immigrants became known as the \textit{andriana}, or noble class, in Imerina – the central highlands kingdom, which is still an ethnic region of Madagascar today.\textsuperscript{35} These Malagasy of Arab – possibly Sufi Muslim – ancestry, were the diviners and wise men of their day. They brought with them an understanding of government that rested on a social contract, a covenant that is clearly borne out in the use of \textit{kabary} as a palaver in which ruler and ruled worked out the details of their

\begin{footnotes}
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\item[34] Keenan, “Conversation and Oratory,” 124-25.
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governance. In the political sphere, *kabary* is a dialogue, a stylized conversation between the ruler and the ruled in which the ruler lays out his or her program and the people assent verbally with interjections and with a responding speech. Even a monarch, however, when speaking to his or her assembled people, uses the language of equality rather than any *hauteur*. *Kabary* is not limited to royal discourse; it has found its way into various aspects of Malagasy life, associated not only with politics but also with the various rites of passage of which the most developed is the *kabary vodiondry*, or marriage discourse (lit. “oration [concerning] the sheep’s rump”). All these various *kabary* share similarities of structure. One well-known practitioner of *kabary* lists the major parts as follows: *ny fanatsafana* (testing if it is okay to begin speaking), *ny ala sarona* (literally, “the removal of the lid” or introduction), *ny aza fady* (removal of taboo), *ny fialan-tsiny* (removal of blame), *ny hasina sy arahaba ary firarian- tsoa* (the sacred force/holiness, greeting and well-wishes), *ny ranjany* (literally, “the legs of the steer” – the major point in discussion) and *ny fisaorana* (thanksgiving). What interests us in this discussion at the moment is the *aza fady* and *fialan-tsiny*.

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36 In Islam, the sermon (*khutbah*) at the Friday prayer service follows a fairly rigid structure terminating in the calling down of blessings for and the assurance of allegiance to the reigning sovereign (in a Muslim country). The Prophet Mohammed called for longer prayers and shorter sermons that may have necessitated a strict structure. Books of sermons exist which can be used by the preacher. (See “Friday Sermon,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. M. Mukarram Ahmed (New Delhi: Amnol Publications Pvt. Ltd., 2005), vol. 2: Fundamentals of Islam.; Cyril Glassé, “Sermon,” *The New Encyclopedia of Islam*, 3rd ed. (Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2008), vol. ) An intriguing question would be the relationship between *khutbah* and *kabary*. Emphasis upon a formal structure which in the sermon form required, at the end, prayers for and allegiance to the ruling prince, and the oral proclamation of a Malagasy prince designed to gain allegiance may have some linkages, even if tenuous.

37 Keenan, “Conversation and Oratory,” 134.

"Ny ‘AZA FADY’ amin’ny kably izany dia fangatahan-dalana hiteny sady fanomezam-bontihanhitra ho an’ny mpanatrika,” (“The aza fady in the kably is the request to open the way to speak as well as showing of honor to those who have come to listen,”) says Rabenandrasana.\(^{39}\) One dare not begin without permission. Here the person has broached the cultural concern for putting oneself forward. This is more than just getting people’s attention so that the discourse can begin. That was already done in the testing of the crowd prior. This is a formal request to those gathered to be allowed to dare to speak. In a paradoxical way, it emphasizes the speechmaker and the speech to follow.

There is no more critical part to a kably, however, than the fialan-tsiny. Keenan notes that the kably cannot proceed at all if the speaker and audience have not agreed to forgo any blame that may fall upon the speaker for either making a structural, cultural or relational faux pas.\(^{40}\) Raholdina, a current mpikabary respected enough to have been made a member of the Academie Malagache, puts it this way:

\[\text{Ary tsy misy mihitsy olona afaka ny hanome tsiny an’io FAHAIZANA MAMELABELATRA NY FIALAN-TSINY IO, IZAY FOTOTRA IRAY TENA MAHA-KABARY NY KABARY malagasy, satria ny fialan-tsiny dia sady fiarovan-tena’ilay mpiteny no fanajana ny itenenany. Io ihany koa no anisan’ny mampisongadina ny Mpikabary.}\]

And there is no one at all who can give blame (tsiny) to that ability to explain the fialan-tsiny, which is one basis which truly makes Malagasy kably kably, because the lifting of blame (fialan-tsiny) is both self-protection by the speaker and respect for those spoken to. It is also this alone that separates out the Mpikabary (orator).\(^ {41}\)

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\(^{40}\) Keenan, “Conversation and Oratory,” 182.

\(^{41}\) Raholdina, *Ny Fikabariako: Torolalana ho an’izay te-hahay mikabary* 33. My translation. The emphasis is his.
“Self-protection” and “respect for those spoken to” underline the nature of the speech event. The issue is not simply the receiver or the sender of the message; it is the two in the tension of performance.

The foundation of Malagasy culture shows itself clearly in Raholdina’s definition. *Fihavanana*, or “relationship,” is always the highest ideal held out by Malagasy. It serves as the basis for the culture and the individual’s personality. Dubois comments,

*Avoir de la personnalité, pour un Occidental, c’est savoir, au besoin, se détacher des autres pour affirmer ses opinions envers et contre tout. Avoir de la personnalité, pour un Malgache, consiste à savoir s’unir profondément aux autres, malgré les différences qui naissent nécessairement entre personnes libres. L’Occidental recherche la personnalité dans les qualités individuelles, le Malgache dans ses relations avec les autres.*

To have a personality, for a Westerner, is to know, if necessary, to detach oneself from others to affirm one’s opinions as opposed to and against all. To have a personality, for a Malagasy, consists in knowing to unite oneself profoundly with others, in spite of differences that necessarily arise between free people. The Westerner finds personality in individual qualities, the Malagasy in his relations with others.42

Keenan’s central thesis, in her study of oratory and conversation, is that this formalized request for forgiveness and the removal, in advance, of any possible blame, is the central act of the speech community. It is the exchange of *toky* (confidence, trust).43 It is the basis for the *fihavanana*. It is both the basis for communication and the content of the communication. It establishes relationship, the ultimate goal of the speech act.

If, now, we return to the translation of ἐξ ἀκοῆς as “from preaching” or as “from hearing,” we may have a clearer idea of why the earlier translators, if indeed they were the Malagasy students of the LMS missionaries, chose against the KJV. The issue is not, as a

Westerner might approach it, a stark choice between one side of the equation: sender or receiver. Rather it is a realization that the two are inseparably bound in tension because of the immediacy of the spoken event. Kabary is an event that fundamentally involves the active participation of the speaker and the audience. This is signaled not only by the interjections of the audience, but also by the requirement that the speaker be answered. A kabary fails if it is not answered at all, or is not answered in a supportive manner. Criticism of what was said or the manner in which it was said is permitted in the response, but not an intentional loss of face for the original speaker.

Are we at any distance then from an oral interpretation of Paul’s gospel? Is it possible that the very oral nature of Malagasy culture correctly interprets Paul’s thought here in Romans 10:17? Werner Kelber has raised this issue. In his work, The Oral and the Written Gospel, he states,

The participatory élan distinguishes the Pauline gospel as a genuine oral proclamation, for behind every successful oral performer lies the ability to make hearers live the message. In short, what is implemented in the Pauline language of participation is the epistemological principle of orality that to know actuality is to participate in it.

Faith is established in the participation in the speaking event, a living word communicating a living Word. Words in biblical language, Kelber says, are “an act inviting participation.”

By requiring that the speaker receive a response, Malagasy oratory can be nothing other than a participatory act. Words are whole and unbroken because they are constituted

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44 Unanswered kabary are not universally failures. We will discuss this below.
45 Keenan, “Conversation and Oratory,” 196.
46 Kelber, The Oral and the Written Gospel 150.
47 Kelber, The Oral and the Written Gospel xvi.
by the continuity of the community, both in the presence of the moment and in the
remembered traditions of those who have gone before.

The elders of Ampitaneke rightly understood themselves to be disenfranchised by a
new technology. Their words are broken by an inanimate object whose power has
similarities in their mind to their own hazomanga. The printed words in the book are a
discontinuity with the community for which a response by the “listener” is not possible both
because the medium is unknown and the encoder is no longer present.

**Kabary: Proclamation that is not a Sermon**

When I began the research for this thesis I was sure that I would find that the
missions and their Malagasy convert friends had rejected too quickly the oral art of kabary
for use in Christian preaching. The use of drums and natural Malagasy rhythms, including
clapping, was rejected by the missions and then, beginning in the 1980’s, the Lutheran
missions began to suggest to the church that it re-capture indigenous musical form for its
worship. Was there a reason then to re-examine kabary in this light? As has been noted
elsewhere in this thesis, Malagasy are natural orators and the exercises of riddle
(ankamantatra and ankify) and fairy tale (angano) that feed them in their youth, well
prepare them for public speaking in adulthood. While the preachers who seemed excellent in
the pulpit were also excellent at kabary, the linkage may not be in the appropriateness of
kabary for preaching but in the conditioning that kabary gives towards public speaking. We
will look at some of the resonances and dissonances in the relationship between Christian
preaching and kabary below.

We begin with a brief history of kabary, its structure and its primary content/purpose.
The History of Kabary

The story persists that the first to use kabary in the technical sense was King Ralambo (1575-1610) in Ambohidrabibiby. Through the use of a royal consultation/proclamation (kabary), Ralambo introduced beef (henan-jamoka or hen'omby) into the diet of the Malagasy. He ordered:

Hatramin’izao, ireo hasoan-kena ireo, dia ny trafony sy ny vodihena dia hatao isan’ny hasina avy amin’ny vahoaka, ho hanina ho an’ny Andrainjanjaka ao anatin’ny Tongoamihonkona. Ahy ny lohatringitringiny na ny lohatongoany (araka ny fitenin’ny Ntaolo) izany hoe: ny lohatrafony, fa io no ambony indindra amin’ny omby, ka ahy io, fa izaho no ambony indrindra amin’ny Ambaniandro izao; ary ahy ny vodihena, fa ahy ny faran’ny fanjakana.

From now on, those good parts of the meat, that is the zebu hump and the rump shall be made part of the tribute from the people so that the King may eat it during the “Come-be-bound-together” celebration. The zebu’s hump or the rump (according to the way the Ntaolo said it, [Ntaolo = collective of ancestors outside of named memory]) that is: the hump, for that is the highest point on the ox and that is mine for I am the highest among the Ambaniandro [lit.: People-under-the-Sun] now; and to me belongs the rump, for to me belongs the ends of the kingdom.48

Kabary was then introduced to the High Plateau among the Vazimba, according to the Tantaran’ny Andriana, by King Andrianandranolava sometime in the sixteenth century.49

Voalazan’ny tantara fa nanontany ny Andriana ny vahoaka (vazimba) nanao hoe: “Inona no kabary?” dia namaly azy ny Andriana nanao hoe: “Tsy izaho no tompon’ny kabary fa Andriandranolava.”

And the story goes, that the people (Vazimba) asked the Prince, “What is kabary?” And the Prince answered the people (Vazimba): “It is not I who am master of the kabary, but Andrianandranolava who is master of the kabary.” 50

49 The Rev. R. F. Callet, a Jesuit priest, collected oral histories of the ruling nobility (andriana) that were published in 1908 as Tantaran’ny Andriana (History of the Princes).
The structure of the *kabary* was somewhat dialogical. The sovereign would begin with a call to a “consultation.” This gave the speech the air of a dialogue although, in fact, as time wore on, less and less of a dialogue was actually happening. Keenan gives an example of a typical opening of a *kabary*, quoting from *Tantaran’ny Andriana*:

*Miera aminareo ambanilanitra aho, izao no teniko aminareo ierako. Koa manao ahoana ny tokony hiety hifanarahako izaho sy hianareo.*

I consult with you Dwellers-Beneath-the-Sky [Merina]; now these are the words to you about which I wish to consult. And so in what way should you and I agree.51

The people were then expected to respond in kind to the monarch and the speech would continue. Royal *kabary* were not only expected to be answered by representatives of the people but by the people themselves, who would regularly respond to the sovereign’s question, “*Fa tsy izay va, ry ambaninilanitra?*” (“Is it not so, O dwellers-under-the-sky?”) with “*Izay!*” (“That’s so!”). In this regard, the earliest contacts of Europeans with the court of Andrianampoinimerina (d.1810) led the Europeans to believe that they had stumbled onto a primitive form of enlightened democracy.52 While Andrianampoinimerina had encouraged honest debate within the walls of his palace – *Ny teny an-dapa tsy mahadiso* (“Words [spoken] in the palace are not taken as a mistake”) [that is, “would have no consequence to the

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52 Raison-Jourde, *Bible et pouvoir à Madagascar* 50.
speaker”)) – dissent in a public meeting would not be well received. The monarch’s words had power. They could effect what they said.

[La parole] agit littéralement. “Ny teny manan-jina,” écrit Andriamifidy. La parole une fois émise, articulée…complète (vita), s’accomplit (to)...[Les mots] font adhérer le pensé au reel, le voulu au réalisé."

[The word] happened literally. “The word has fruit,” wrote Andriamifidy. The word, once sent, articulated…complete (vita), is fulfilled (to)...[The words] make the thought adhere to the real, the desired to the realized.”

Raison-Jourde recounts in a footnote an extract from an article by James Sibree regarding a Betsileo chieftain.

“In Betsileo, if some one angers the chief and he pronounces a curse, all think that the words uttered are inalterable and that surely the curse will be accomplished.” If he blesses someone in order to thank him, “those receiving the benediction are very happy, for they suppose that this will also be accomplished. Because the chiefs are thought to possess a power in the words which they offer...a power like that of God; a

53 Here I disagree with Keenan (“Conversation and Oratory” 129) and take Raison-Jourde’s analysis (Bible et pouvoir à Madagascar 50-51). There is here represented the appearance of a consultation, but the monarch is not likely to be opposed significantly. The quotation of the ‘Living Law’ of Andrianampoinimerina is from Keenan. See also Rabenandrasana Lalao François and Rasoaanatsimba Abéline E., Diary Kanto (Antananarivo: Imprimerie 2000, 2004) 27: Nanomboka teo amin’ny andro’Ilaidama dia efa saika fomba fotstiny ilay valin-kabary nifampierana fahiny toy ny tamin’ny andron’Andriamasinaivalona fa izay sitrapon’ny mpitondra na ny manjaka no tsy maintsy toavin’ny andriamasinaivalona became a tradition only but the will of the leader or the one ruling was what had to be obeyed.” My translation.

54 A communication with J. Ramamonjisoa cited by Raison-Jourde, Bible et pouvoir à Madagascar 50-51. My translation.
power that acts by itself in consequence of its inherent virtue, and not a power 
exercised by means of soldiers or servants.”

We will return below to the issue of the power of words in *kabary*. For the moment, 
however, it should be noted that royalty held enormous power within the political and social 
structures of the Merina people of the 19th Century. Raison-Jourde states that there was near 
unanimity on the part of missionaries of the period regarding the total obedience the people 
showed towards their sovereign, to the point of religious devotion.

The most famous, and perhaps most important culturally, of the *kabary* from the 

Merina sovereigns are those of Andrianampoinimerina. He is often quoted still and studied 
by students in school. Some of his *kabary* are collected, along with a selection of those of his 
successors in a small book entitled *Kabary Malagasy*. Andrianampoinimerina’s tone is 
paternal. Indeed, he is the only true ‘father’ of the people. As such, the monarch is the only

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56 Raison-Jourde, *Bible et pouvoir à Madagascar* 104-05.

57 I.e., *Ny Kabary nataon-d Ravalomanjaka momba ny lalana malagasy*.
one, truly, who can innovate, as evidenced earlier by Ralambo’s introduction of beef. A short extract of one of Andrianampoinimerina’s speeches will give the reader a sense of the style:

_Izao ary, ry ambilinanitra, fa izaho no toa miteny matetika ary mikabary isam-bolana aminareo ambanandro: Imerina ary tahaka ny ava-voly, ka izay miava matetika manana ny vokatra; koa izaho no toa miteny matetika ary mikabary isam-bolana, izany. Ka raha tsy atoro anareo izay лаam-be haleanareo, be arey Imerina, kandrao misy mivily ka potraka, ary miringiringy ka lavo. Koa raha tsy ambara aminareo izay fanompoan-katao, andrao mahadiso fanompoana ny mpanompo; ka amoriako anareo Imerina, izany._

So this is it, O dwellers-under-heaven, for it is I who, as it were, speak often and give _kabary_ every month to you dwellers-under-the-sun; Imerina is like weeding the garden, and whoever weeds often has the produce; and so it is I who, as it were, speaks often and give _kabary_ every month. And so if you are not pointed to the wide road on which you will go – Imerina are many – lest there are those who turn and so are fallen, and go up to a great height and so fall. And so if that service to be done is not announced to you, forbid it that the servants are mistaken in service; and so that is the reason I gather you, Imerina.59

Andrianampoinimerina used _kabary_ to govern, as did his predecessors. What Andrianampoinimerina added was a ‘distribution system.’ In a non-literate society the only way to promulgate new laws and regulations is by word of mouth. He assigned _vadin-tany_ (“spouses-of-the-land”) whose function was to hear the royal _kabary_ and then repeat it in the various markets that he had set up around his realm and/or to the area heads (_ambonin-jato_, lit. “above-a-hundred”) who would repeat the _kabary_ to others. Early missionaries were impressed by the memories of these _vadin-tany_; they felt that the material was reproduced _verbatim_.60 One function of a _kabary_ was to recite the lineage of the sovereign (_tetiarana fikabariana_). Ranovalona I (1790-1861) had three persons dedicated the recitation of the

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58 See also Raison-Jourde, _Bible et pouvoir à Madagascar_ 104.
royal lineage as a counter to what she saw as the European royal lineages set up in the
Bible. As there would have been no written standard for validating the memories of these
orators, it is more likely that the method of oral composition was similar to that described in
Chapter 1. This method has survived in the current forms of kabary practiced in Imerina and
Betsileo.

Figures 7 and 8: Queen Ranavalona III's last kabary at Andohalo, Antananarivo, 1895.

While I have found no history of non-royal kabary – that is kabary for occasions such
as marriage (kabary vodiondry), for funerals (kabary am-pandevenana) or for performance
festivals (hira gasy) – it is clear that these forms existed in the nineteenth century. With the
annexation of Madagascar by the French in 1896 and the exile of Queen Ranavalona III
(1863-1917), royal kabary necessarily ceased. The ordering of Malagasy society and
Malagasy worldview were maintained however in the less obviously politically charged
kabary for special occasions. Large gatherings were forbidden by the new French colonial
administration. As a result the ‘social’ kabary were perhaps more important as a means for

\[ \text{Raison-Jourde, Bible et pouvoir à Madagascar 58. In a footnote, Raison-Jourde citing G. Mondain, “Note sur les tout premiers débuts de la littérature malgache,” Bulletin de l’Académie Malgache XXVI (1944-45), adds: “Un traditionniste formé ainsi à Namehana, et envoyé au Kabary du Premier ministre en 1885, le répèta entièrement au Résident français, ce qui prit une heure de temps.” [“A traditionalist formed thusly at Namehana and sent to the kabary of the Prime Minister in 1885, repeated it entirely to the French Resident, that which took one hour.” My translation.} \]
perpetuating Malagasy culture and art against the onslaught of colonial hegemony.

Rabenandrasana and Rasoazanatsimba write:

\[
\text{Na izany aza anefa, dia toy ny sodifafana natsipy an-kady ny kabary ka mainka nitsiry, satria teo no niroborobaon ny kabary ara-piarahamonina, dia ny am-panambadiana sy ny am-pandevenana ary ny kabary an-danonana, koa ireo indray no sehatra mivelarana sy nivahan'ny lelan-dRamalagasy.}
\]

However, kabary is like a sprout leaf plant that has been thrown away in a hole: it germinates with renewed vigor. That is where [in the colonial period] the social kabary grew quickly and developed themselves: wedding speeches, the funeral discourse and the ceremonial addresses. Therefore these became the arenas where the Malagasy loosened their tongues again and made it blossom.\(^{62}\)

Rabenandrasana and Rasoazanatsimba appear to say that these kabary became a ‘hidden transcript,’ to use the language of James Scott.\(^ {63}\) That is to say that these kabary became forms of resistance to the colonial power. Examples of these social kabary, however, were recorded by Cousins and others in the 1800’s, and there does not seem to be sufficient difference among the kabary of the pre-colonial period, the colonial period and those of the later twentieth and early twenty-first centuries to merit such a claim. What the social kabary do, however, is preserve from one generation to the next a part of the essential Malagasy culture, and in particular, the cultures of Imerina and Betsileo.

Lee Haring has demonstrated that kabary is built on the structure of riddling language.\(^ {64}\) There is a precedent and a sequent to the structures of the riddle and subsequently the proverb (ohabolana). From these develop hainteny (roughly, “poetry” formed by extended metaphor, often based on proverbs) which all are resource to the

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\(^{62}\) Rabenandrasana, \textit{Diary Kanto} 28. I am indebted to Ravelojaona Olivier, a second-year student at Lutheran Theological Seminary Saskatoon, for his assistance with this translation. Sodifafana is a plant also known in English as “Canterbury Bells,” among others, and has medicinal properties.


\(^{64}\) Haring, \textit{Verbal Arts in Madagascar} 165-166.
This structure both feeds and reflects the dialogical nature of kabary. Kabary, especially, the marriage kabary (kabary vodiondry) is a contest. In the Betsileo version, a kabary of any sort (also known as lahatsa) requires two speakers. As Haring states, “In Madagascar, oratorical creativity takes place in a setting of contestation and a spirit of conflict.” Two short excerpts of an opening of a kabary and a response to the opening of a kabary written by Maurice Rasamuël may give the reader a flavor of the conflictual nature of the dialogue. Here the first speaker begins:

Tsy dia rivotra isika ka hiady fiakarana,
Tsy rano ka hiady fitinana,
Tsy toho ka hiady rano,
Tsy valala ka hiady fandriana.
Aty tsy omby ka hiady kijana.
Fa ny teny ifamaliana no mahatsara fihavanana,
Ary fisaka ny rariny ka saro-tadiavina.
Koa samia milaza izay fantany.
Ataovy tera-bary, ka samia mamoaka ny am-pony.

We are not the wind to fight for an ascent,
Nor water to fight for a descent,
Nor small fish to fight the water,
Nor locust to fight for a resting place.
Here are no cattle to fight for folds.
But the debate is what makes for good relationships,
And justice is so thin that it is hard sought after,
And so let each say what he/she knows.
Make as the ears of rice which begin to appear [in the field], and let each divulge what is in his/her heart.

The speaker continues with his own statements about his opponent. Finally, the opponent responds:

65 Haring, *Verbal Arts in Madagascar* 152-90.
67 Haring, *Verbal Arts in Madagascar* 180.
Raha tsy miteny toa miavona,
Ary raha tsy mamaly toa tezitra.
Hamaly ny tenin’Andriamatoa ka aza fady.
Hay hianao vorontsiloza ka raha siahina dia midoroboka;
Nosiahiko kely ka dia nidoroboka!
Hay hianao volomborona ka raha isofina dia misavoana;
Nosofiko kely ka nisavoana!
Hay hianao tandra ka raha terena dia manaititra;
Notereko kely ka dia manaititra!
Ary hay hianao tsy mahalala sangy, fa raha voatohina dia mandaboka;
Nosangiko kely ka dia mandaboka:
Kanefa ombalahy isangodidina-menarana aho izao,
Ka raha ombay ny vavany aho, tonon’androko ny ho laniny.

If [one] does not speak he/she is seemingly haughty,
And if [one] does not respond he/she is seemingly angry.
[I] will respond to the gentleman’s words and so excuse me.
Hey, you are a turkey and if whistled at then it gobbles;
I whistled softly and then you gobbled!
Hey, you are a feather and if blown then floats in the air;
I blew lightly and then [you] floated!
Hey, you are pliers and when pulled, bite;
I pulled a little and [you] bit!
And hey, you cannot take a joke, if slightly jostled then [you] throw down;
I joked a little and then [you] threw me down:
However I am now a bull wrapped by a serpent,
So if I fit in his mouth, the luck of the day will be his.68

The riddle-like language is evident in these two excerpts. One can almost hear the questions:
“what is not wind rising…what is not water falling…?, etc.” The riddle allows, by its
evasive nature, for truth to be spoken to power and for things too difficult for direct speech to be addressed through indirection. So the social kabary deal often with rites of passage where contest and conflict, continuity and rupture are inherent: marriage, circumcision, death, etc.
Through the contest, which is the formalized dialogue, the destabilized situation is resolved.
The use of language is therefore the artful, controlled use of power.

Above we briefly looked at the structure of a kabary. It is not my intent here to detail kabary. What is clear is that kabary is an oral art, adhering in many ways to the descriptions of oral composition discussed in Chapter 1. Kabary distinguishes itself from general Western norms of literate composition in the arrangement of the material. Proverbs, poetry, even biblical material, are not arranged in a linear – or to a Western mind, logical – fashion.

Each expression of teny an-kolaka [‘winding words’ or ‘indirect speech’] is thought to refer to the theme with equal weight. The meaning becomes clearer as these expressions are ‘stacked.’ It is not that the references have become more and more specific. Rather, it is that each expression serves to narrow the possible implications of accompanying expressions.69

To use the expression of John Miles Foley, the ‘word-power’ here is once again derived from the register (kabary), in the performance arena of a traditional rites of passage (a marriage kabary is cited above) with the communicative economy being provided by the metaphoric speech learned from proverbs and riddling.70 For more detail on kabary, the interested reader would find multiple works in Malagasy71 and Haring’s work in English good starting places. Instead, I would like to focus on the cultural dialogue and transfer from one generation to another represented in its form.

69 Keenan, “Conversation and Oratory,” 278. Emphasis is hers.

70 See Chapter 1.

In the section known as the fialan-tsiny ("request that blame be lifted" or, in English idiom, "request for forgiveness"), an important cultural concept is addressed, explained and bridged. We turn first to several definitions of tsiny in order to situate the concept.

Richardson defines the word thus:

**TSI’NY**, s. Blame, censure, fault, imperfection; in the provinces it also means chastisement.72

Rajemisa-Raolison defines the word in his dictionary:

*Tsiny* a.: *Fanamelohan’ny mpiara-monina noho ny hadisoana nataon’ny tena taminy…ota, fahotana…*

: Condemnation by neighbors because of the wrong-doing done by the self to them…sin, sinning.73

These definitions, however, do not get at the power and depth of meaning the term has for Malagasy culture. Rajemisa-Raolison’s definition does help give us the social character of tsiny. *Tsiny* is a relational concept. Richard Andriamanjato’s short book on *tsiny* is one of the most helpful. He writes,

*Au fond, le “tsiny” trace les frontiers de la condition humaine et délimite pour chaque individu son espace vital. Si vous voulez éviter le “tsiny,” il vous faut rester dans l’espace qui vous est dévolu. Si vous essaye d’en sortir, vous semez le désordre dans le système entier de l’univers et vous en subirez les conséquences.*

Basically, "tsiny" maps the frontiers of the human condition and defines for each individual the boundaries of his/her living space. If you would prevent “tsiny,” you must remain in the space that you are allotted. If you try to leave, you sow disorder in the entire system of the universe and you will suffer the consequences.74

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72 Richardson, *A New Malagasy-English Dictionary* 706.
Andriamanjato distinguishes this from fatalism by noting that this is the experience of Malagasy rather than their sense of fate. Furthermore, tsiny can have a positive function as that of conscience. There can be good tsiny. It causes the speaker to reflect carefully on what he/she is about to do. It is the cosmic sense of tsiny that conceptualizes it as a power both interior (as in some sense guilt) and exterior to the person. The mpikabary (orator) is obliged to avoid tsiny from the outset lest it consume or trip him/her. “Ka toy ny azo tsapain-tanana mihitsy ny fafaham-pon’ny mpikabary rehefa afany ny tsiny.” [“And so it is as if one could really touch with hands the satisfaction (literally: freedom of the heart) of the orator when he rids himself of tsiny.”]

Another extract from a kabary will serve to explicate:


However, even if the tsiny is removed by the mouth, it depends on your behaviour. If what we do is good, the tsiny is lifted by itself, even if the mouth does not remove it. It passes simply like the water off a duck’s back (it peels off by itself like cow dung that has fallen in the dust of the earth) and so it even remains it will be swept from the earth. And it separates by itself without being cut like the heavens and the earth. But if what we do is not right, oh! Even if the tsiny has been removed, it grows anyway; even if it leaves today, it returns again tomorrow, or the next day. It is good three days like the beard close shaved, and like the leper sneezing, and so “bless you” today, but swollen tomorrow. And so in whatever is done beware not to have tsiny.

Tsiny is a power and is described as having a reality that borders on the physical. A

mpikabary speaks of removing the tsiny and sending it far away but its persistence is strong.

So, some say,

“Alefa any Ikopa, ho any Betsiboka, hikorisa any amin’i Farahantsana ka tsy
hiverina intsony,” dia valian’ny sasany hoe: “Sao tra tran’ny tsiny ny mpaka fasika sy
ny mpanjono ary ny mpanasa lamba eny amin’ny rano sns., ka manjary miverina
indray amintsika nandefa azy tany ny tsiny.

“Send it to the Ikopa [River], to the Betsiboka [River], slide it along there at
Farahantsana [Falls] and it will not return again,” but the others respond, “Lest those
gathering sand and the fishermen and those washing clothes there in the water, etc.,
are caught by tsiny and so it happens to return again to us who sent it there.”79

Raholdina, quoted immediately above, offers a modern version by suggesting that tsiny be
placed in a basket and sent to the United States for an atomic bomb to destroy and then he
offers the response, as well, that we would be responsible then for the destruction of the
environment, just as we are responsible for chemical agents found therein.80 The resulting
picture of tsiny seems not far from Christian descriptions of sin, indeed “original sin.”

Here we return to the concept of power in the spoken word. It is the power of public
speech – here, kabary – to remove and break the power of tsiny. Speech then becomes the
means for restoring fihavanana, “relationship.” Andriamanjato writes: “Cependant, malgré
cette puissance presque illimitée du ‘tsiny,’ l’homme essaie de s’en débarrasser et nous
avons vu qu’il le fait par conjuration et par la parole.” [“However, in spite of this nearly
unlimited power of ‘tsiny,’ man tries to rid himself of it and we have seen that he does so by

80 Raholdina, Ny Fikabariako: Ny Kabary Malagasy Ankehitriny, Fianarana Mikabary 15. This metaphor
must have some common parlance because Rabenandrasana Lalao François, President of the Malagasy
Mpikabary Association, also used it in a interview with me. Kabary, therefore, as an art is in living
conjuration and by the word.”]81 As we have seen above, the power of the word to accomplish what it says is a long-standing concept in Malagasy philosophy. It is not surprising then to read a claim for *kabary* that sounds like it came straight from Christian dogmatics:


There are many reasons that proverbs and those other different sayings are needed because they are not decorations or emphatic words only, but they carry amazing hidden power, and they give power to the PROCLAIMED WORD. And we Christians also see that in the Bible even where it says that God speaks, “Let there be light,” and there is light, etc.; because of this, it is seen that “speaking” has its own great importance because on the basis of this we individual human beings communicate, or we communicate with God, too, by means of prayer. The *Mpikabary* is like that, too: a speaker of messages, one who convinces [others], and he solves problems by means of the WORD but not by means of works at all.82

While Raholdina makes no secret of his Christian faith, his expression here demonstrates that Christian theology has become a significant overlay or lens for viewing the power understood to be inherent in the spoken word within Malagasy culture. It might be well here also to note that Richard Andriamanjato (1930– ) is also a well-known, ordained minister in the *Fiangonan’ny Jesosy Kristy Eto Madagasikara* (FJKM: The Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar, a union church formed in 1970 representing the former London Missionary Society, the French Evangelical Churches, and the Society of Friends). He has also been


heavily active in politics, having served once as mayor of Antananarivo and as head of a major political party.83

This interplay between Malagasy culture and Christian theology has roots as old as the nineteenth-century mission effort. A most thoroughgoing analysis of the effects of Christian mission on Malagasy politics and culture can be found in Françoise Raison-Jourde’s, *Bible et pouvoir à Madagascar au XIXe siècle: Invention d'une identité chrétienne et construction de l'Etat (1780-1880)*. The reader is referred to that work for a detailed analysis. For our purposes, several highlights will suffice. From 1835 to 1861 Christianity was a banned and persecuted religion. In 1869, Queen Ranavalona II (d. 1885, ruled 1868-1885) announced her conversion to Christianity. During the time of persecution, Bibles and other religious literature were strictly forbidden and burned when found. The persecuted Christian communities memorized texts, each person taking a portion and so worship and preaching were structured around a community sharing of the remembered texts with the most senior members commenting. This method necessarily continued after the legalization of Christianity in 1861. Raison-Jourde writes,

*La situation du moment était ainsi éclairée par un retour au modèle primitif, qui, seul, en l’absence de l’autorité divine déléguée qu’incarnaient auparavant les missionnaires, pouvait autoriser le choix d’une conduite. Le traitement systématique du texte “par analogie” visait donc à en extraire modèles de conduite et de prise de décision, et non pas une meilleure connaissance “in abstracto” de la pensée de ses rédacteurs.*

The current situation was enlightened by a return to the primitive model, which alone in the absence of the divine, delegated authority incarnated formerly by the missionaries could allow the choice of behavior. The systematic processing of the text

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"by analogy" was therefore to extract patterns of behavior and decision making, and not to better know "in abstrato" the mind of its drafters.\textsuperscript{84}

While, Raison-Jourde notes, there was an effectiveness to the evangelistic efforts of these older, formerly persecuted believers,\textsuperscript{85} the depth of their appreciation of the text was hampered by the necessity to hold all in memory without the distanciation which literate reflection allows. Furthermore, mpi kabary, who had converted or declared themselves after the lifting of the edict, added their voices to the preaching, often taking a verse from Proverbs or a small portion of another text as their theme, in some cases without any reference to the gospel. The multiplicity of images obscured rather than explained a text. And the multiplicity of necessary respondents to a kabary increased congregational conflict.\textsuperscript{86} The mission response to this challenge included theological education on a Western model and the publication of sermon outlines that helped guide preachers into following structured themes.\textsuperscript{87} For this interaction, the reader is again referred to Raison-Jourde.

What is significant theologically for our consideration is the cultural understanding of the interface between kabary and preaching that became more porous after the period of persecution.

\textit{Pour la comprendre, c'est un nouveau regard qu'il faudrait jeter sur l'art de la prédication, importé par les missionnaires, et cette fois-ci en partant de la structure du discours merina. Elle apparaît toujours comme le discours lu par un envoyé (iraka) du Souverain céleste, un kabary dont la seule particularité est qu'on n'y attend pas de réponse, d'où le nom de kabary tsy valiana (kabary sans response), qui lui sera donné par les masses populaires après 1869.}

\textsuperscript{84} Raison-Jourde, \textit{Bible et pouvoir à Madagascar} 180. My translation.

\textsuperscript{85} Raison-Jourde, \textit{Bible et pouvoir à Madagascar} 180.

\textsuperscript{86} Raison-Jourde, \textit{Bible et pouvoir à Madagascar} 565.

\textsuperscript{87} Raison-Jourde, \textit{Bible et pouvoir à Madagascar} 566-74.
In order to understand [the rapid changes], we should take a new look on the art of preaching, imported by the missionaries, and this time starting from the structure of Merina discourse. It always appears like the speech read by an envoy (iraka) of the Sovereign of heaven, a *kabary* of which the sole peculiarity is that we do not expect an answer, hence the name *kabary tsy valiana* (an unanswered *kabary*) that will be given it by the popular masses after 1869.88

When I first began this study, I understood that a *kabary tsy valiana* is a speech delivered with some anger and, therefore, no one would want to respond to it. This clearly was a misreading of the culture. It can be considered angry or received as such because it is an indisputable command. The overlay of colonization adds to the meaning.

*Faha-zanatany no nisian’ny kabary tsy valiana noho ny nanomezan’ireo mpitondra ny didijadona sy ny teny midina zary baiko ka nahatonga ilay fitenim-bazaha lazaina mandraka ankehitriny hoe: “TENY BAIKO.”*

It was during the period of colonization when there was the *kabary tsy valiana* because the [governing leaders] gave authoritarian commands and ‘top down’ words which became orders so that French is spoken of even until today as “ORDER LANGUAGE.”89

This negative sense is not entirely missing from the pre-colonial understanding. The sovereign and elders have the right to give unquestioned orders. Nor is the positive sense missing from the modern understanding of *kabary tsy valiana*. Raholdina states that as a person ages and learns to speak well in public, he/she becomes *tompon-teny* (master of the word).90 Quoting Malagasy proverbs, he says,


> “Those who are truly elders having lived long are masters of the word.” Because of this they have become capable to speak automatically and when the elders speak then

90 There is a play on words in Malagasy between *tompon-teny* (master of the word) and *tompon-tany* (master of the land). Another reason that rulers and elders must be good speakers!
it becomes like the saying, “The elders are never wrong,” and it is thought that they are always right and so their words become “kabary tsy valiana.”

This interplay between the language of command and the language of the wise and respected elder, the fact that kabary by its nature is dialogical and even conflictual, and the fact that kabary’s heavy use of proverbial sources is, in a sense, a reliance on a different canon, these reasons among others, are, in the end, why it could not be accepted either by the nineteenth-century missionaries or Christians of the twenty-first century. These are the limits of inculturation.

It has long been understood that the practice of Christianity occurs in myriad cultural contexts into which its scriptures and rites have been translated. Amidst the inquiries into inculturation questions conducted by its ecumenical partners, the Lutheran World Federation has discussed this question from various perspectives since 1976.

Not only questions of translation in terms of verbal arts, but questions of music and gesture and aesthetics enter into the consideration of developing communication in mission contexts that can faithfully bear the theological, liturgical meanings intended. The communication must be authentic to the historical and incarnational aspects of the Christian confession. But it must also be relevant, that is, meaningful to a given people in a given

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91 Raholdina, Ny Fikabariako: Torolalana ho an’izay te-hahay mikabary 17.
culture in a particular time and place. Local and global considerations regarding the communication forms of liturgy and textual translation must be held in coherent tension; that is, contextual or inculturating truths and transcultural truths are two necessary and simultaneous values in the one proclamation of God for the world.

As the culture of the biblical-historic liturgical world enters into a particular social culture a creative process of bridging worlds of meanings must take place. The "marks" of Christian fidelity, a central concept in confessional Lutheranism, must be maintained and yet made coherent in terms comprehensible to the culture being entered. The late twentieth-century LWF studies culminated in a statement setting forth a theory of the dynamics present in the interpretive meeting of Christian worship practices and local cultures, the "Nairobi Statement on Worship and Culture, 1996." Four ways of relating dynamically to surrounding cultures were identified as necessary to effective inculturation of the message.

First, it is transcultural, the same substance for everyone everywhere, beyond culture. Second, it is contextual, varying according to the local situation (both nature and culture). Third, it is counter-cultural, challenging what is contrary to the Gospel in a given culture. Fourth, it is cross-cultural, making possible sharing between different local cultures. In all four dynamics, there are helpful principles that can be identified. The principle of the contextuality of worship includes two categories of particular interest for the study of the issues of language in liturgy and preaching, "dynamic equivalence" and "creative


The category of dynamic equivalence as a means of contextualization is described:

Among the methods of contextualization, that of dynamic equivalence is particularly useful. It involves re-expressing components of Christian worship with something from a local culture that has an equal meaning, value, and function. It involves understanding the fundamental meanings both of the elements of worship and the local culture, and enabling the meanings and actions of worship to be “encoded” and re-expressed in the language of local culture.

The concept of dynamic equivalence is key for considering the possibility of the inculturation of Christian homiletics in Madagascar through use of the kabary forms and characteristics which hold such high cultural place both in terms of Malagasy identity, truth-telling, and the aesthetic oral arts of authority. The process of dynamic equivalence offers a way of discerning the reasons for the apparent rejection of kabary as a key homiletical form.

Dynamic equivalence is a four-fold process of discernment that involves a complete examination of the values of the historic liturgical elements (including preaching forms potentially) against the horizon of the local symbolical, cultural codes. First, the “theology, history, basic elements, and cultural backgrounds” of the importing rites must be understood so that the second step of determining which aspects of the liturgy are unscathed by cultural “dress” can be accomplished. Third, potential cultural forms for “re-expressing” the Gospel are studied in order to understand, fourth, the pastoral, formational benefit to the worshipping community to so “re-express” the Gospel. The third component is most critical in terms of the necessity of a deep understanding of how the values under consideration for tools of re-

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97 These categories are the fruit of the seminal inculturation studies of the Roman Catholic scholar, Anscar Chupungco, OSB. He participated in the Lutheran World Federation consultations during the late 1990’s. See Anscar J. Chupungco, Cultural Adaptation of the Liturgy (New York/Ramsey: Paulist Press, 1982).

expression function in the culture. This third step, of assessing the potential of contextual cultural forms for their capacity to authentically and relevantly “re-express” the Christian content, is the key step for assessing the utility assigned to *kabary* for Christian preaching.

The second means of contextualization, creative assimilation, is defined in the Nairobi Statement as follows:

(Creative assimilation) consists of adding pertinent components of local culture to the liturgical ordo in order to enrich its original core ... Unlike dynamic equivalence, creative assimilation enriches the liturgical ordo— not by culturally re-expressing its elements, but by adding to it new elements from local culture. Such cultural elements borrowed into the Christian practices must necessarily be co-natural to the core meaning of the Christian action, having been critiqued and clarified both scripturally and theologically.

**Conclusion**

There has been sufficient reason theologically and scripturally to resist *kabary* as an appropriate medium for sermon proclamation. While the missionary emphasis upon the written word of Scripture has too easily been assimilated by Malagasy cultural logic into an equivalency of spiritual technologies (book = *hazomanga*, for example), there is something necessary to Christian theology that words “break.” The Word is not free flowing, without direction or purpose, endlessly enraptured by its own art. Rather the Word is broken at the Cross of Christ that, as we have seen in terms of the literate theology of the Gospel of Mark (see Chapter 3), functions as a canon, a measure, a limit. Endless innovation begins to shift

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the message and the medium away from its purpose to another. We noted, for example, that King Ralambo introduced kabary in order to innovate the diet of his subjects. Today kabary acts primarily as a preserving and conserving agent, holding the past and its culture secure against the onslaught of modernity and globalization.

*Kabary*, we have noted, is founded upon the underlying language and thought patterns of riddles, of precedent and sequent that allow truth to be spoken from the safe vantage point of indirection. *Kabary*, in this sense, allows truth to be spoken to power whether that power is the monarch or the nation assembled but reticent, recalcitrant or refusing authority. Sermons, however, are the ultimate power speaking truth. Sermons are an act of confession in which the confessor trusts in the power of the One in whose name he/she speaks to provide protection, even resurrection.

The rites of passage in Malagasy culture are all marked by *kabary* in which the rupture of relationships is restored through the power of the spoken word. Rites of passage certainly mark the Christian life as well (baptism, confirmation, marriage, funeral, and, for the Malagasy, exorcism) and these rites also necessarily involve a spoken word. But the weekly proclamation of the Gospel is more of a reminder to those who have passed through the threshold of the One who has led them through, and a pointing to where they are headed. While one might argue that Christians are permanently liminars, “For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come” (Hebrews 13:14), life is not marked in quite the same intensive way as in the perils of specific passages.

Much of the function of a *kabary* is to represent to the community the treasures of its past, the values of Malagasy culture and the importance of social relationships that have historically been framed hierarchically. Initially, *andriana* (nobility) were the orators and
only men *mpikabary*. Today there are women *mpikabary* and the strict system of class has been bridged if not eliminated. From the beginning even a slave could preach. *Kabary* helps Malagasy culture retain its Malagasy-ness and thus serves an important function. In its stricter forms, it may have little to offer the church catholic because of its limited transcultural mobility. Moreover, sermons may be founded upon the record of the past but they are rooted in the future. Sermons call the faithful beyond the horizon; they are fixed more forward than backward.

All this said there is still something that draws our attention. In what way can *kabary*, recaptured by the Malagasy Lutheran Church in the same way that the church might recapture the rhythms of Malagasy indigenous music, serve to promote the gospel in Madagascar and offer something profound to the church catholic?

First, what missionaries saw as a lack of logical sequence and clarity of outline in the nineteenth century and beyond, is really orality’s aggregative style. The power to convince the audience lays not so much on the linear logic of the argument but on the weight of examples and the authority of the ancestors, even those ancient witnesses represented by Scripture. We teach in North American Homiletics classes such styles as “a string of pearls” or “the jewel” or “facet” sermon.”¹⁰¹ These are aggregative, cumulative styles favored by oral people. Furthermore, the aggregative style is represented in Scripture. *Kabary* offers a second thought on a style that has been effective for hundreds of years.

Not unimportant is the beauty of language that opens the hearers mind and heart to the message. *Kabary* holds the listener’s interest and resonates deep in the soul by skillfully using the proverbs and conventions of speech that elicit memory and give authority to words.

Sermons are also an art form. The attention paid the art may reap great rewards, particularly for the Malagasy.

The underlying Malagasy philosophy in kabary that spoken words have power may help us reclaim our theological roots that speak of a viva vox evangelii, a Word that does not return empty (Isaiah 55:11). Westerners, today, may underestimate the power of the Word and of words to shape and form community, to do what the Word says: change the world.

It is with this emphasis on community formation that I would like to end. Kabary is communitarian. It expects others to speak. Keenan says of kabary, “The entire kabary performance ought to consist of a web of kabary, in which ideas are reinforced and repeated. In other words, it is important that the sentiments of the speechmaker ought to be shared by the community present.” So much preaching, in Madagascar and in the West, has concentrated on the individual’s relationship to God, the individual’s salvation, that there lacks a solid understanding of community. This ‘web of kabary’ could help us move away from thinking of a sermon as delivered by an individual to individuals but as a community event where the liturgically situated proclamation leads to response, perhaps liturgically situated but also delivered outside the assembly in the world – to mission. If Malagasy homiletics can recapture this aspect of kabary, it will have an important gift to give to the church catholic.

We began by examining the concept that reading, in Malagasy, is represented as ‘breaking words’: mamaky teny. When a mpikabary begins his/her oration, it is said that

102 See Chapter 2, note 146 on page 90.
he/she *mamaky volana*, also ‘breaks words.’ In both cases, the thoughts contained therein are to be pondered.
Conclusion

When I was at college studying for my bachelor’s degree, I overheard a fellow student speaking to a friend on the phone. During the conversation the languages used changed incessantly – Spanish, French, Italian, German, English, etc. I was amazed and intrigued. Turning to another friend standing nearby, I asked him and he told me that the fellow on the phone was the son of diplomats and had lived abroad for most of his childhood. When the multi-lingual student got off the phone, I asked him why he changed languages so often. He said, “Some things you can just say better in one language rather than another.” I never forgot that and have since found that it is true that some thoughts are better expressed in Malagasy, French, Norwegian or English. Translating classical and Koine Greek has taught me the same. The language itself programs the brain to think in new and different ways.

Eric Havelock describing the difference between Homeric Greek with its controlled poetics and the developing styles of written discourse says:

Control over the style of a people’s speech, however indirect, means control also over their thought. The two technologies of preserved communication known to man, namely the poetized style with its acoustic apparatus and the visual prosaic style with its visual and material apparatus, each within their respective domains control also the content of what is communicable. Under one set of conditions man arranges his experience in words in some one given way; under the second set of conditions he

arranges the same experience differently in different words and with different syntax and perhaps as he does so the experience itself changes.\(^2\)

What I have attempted to demonstrate in this thesis is that not only does control over language derived from its technologies of memory and expression influence thought and experience, such control also governs theological expression. There is a difference in a theology based fundamentally in an oral environment as opposed to a theology based in a more literate environment. This difference is demonstrable in a comparison of Malagasy and Western theologies of homiletics.

We began by looking at the history of the *Fifohazana* (revival or awakening) movement in Madagascar where we saw that a particular theology of the preached Word is expressed by the originally non-literate leaders – especially Rainisoalambo and Volahavana Germaine. Although the *Fifohazana* was born out of the churches planted by nineteenth- and twentieth-century missionary endeavor, it demonstrates a thoroughgoing, orally based understanding of sacred authority active in the Malagasy cultural context.\(^3\) The organizing leaders of the *Fifohazana*, themselves intimately associated with the indigenous religious systems of meaning, either through direct participation or through familial upbringing, have tapped into the power of that culture and its oral foundation.

Rainisoalambo and his Disciples of the Lord (especially those in the independent movement, as characterized by the church-related branch) were not concerned with literary distinctions such as Old and New Testament, preferring rather to view the scriptures as

\(^2\) Havelock, *Preface to Plato* 142.

\(^3\) “…there is a sense in which the *Fifohazana* has come closer than any other to translating the meaning and power of the Gospel into Malagasy oral culture and idiom. The movement seems to form a bridge between the stark requirements of literacy and the familiar traditional orality of Malagasy society and is playing a significant part in contextualizing the penetrating message of Christianity.” Bouwer, “Relationship between Language and Revival in Madagascar,” 187.
phenomenologically of one plane. The consequence of this holistic reception is the finding that Fifohazana adherents do not make academically literary distinctions between the “original” recipients of the scriptures and their current readers. Such totalizing is a mark of the oral nature (‘savage mind’) of the community, as argued in Lévi-Strauss. This same totalizing “power” of the texts permeated the usage of the texts themselves as living powers or talismans in ways parallel to the indigenous use of the sorabe texts of the Antemoro. The context of the Christian texts, preached or read, is always immediate, another mark of the oral mindset of the Fifohazana movement which does not conceptualize the scriptures as being distantiated from the believer in time and space. As such, the text expresses the Christian, living voice of the saints, the equivalent of the indigenous Malagasy concept of the Ntaolo: the community of deceased ancestors (razana) who are always with us (Ny razana tsy mba maty).

Rainisoalambo’s simple yet profound exegesis of the gospels based upon his ‘flat’ horizon of interpretation was aided by the social and historical conditions of his day that were similar to those of Palestine in the first century, C.E. The Soatanana movement, as developed by Rainisoalambo, understands itself as participating in the reality of the scriptural world and its faith-filled, apostolic communities. Both these scriptural communities (toby) and the shepherd ( mpiandry) movement are ontic expressions of the one revelation of God’s Word, preached, read, and passed on in preaching. Thus, the preaching, mission work, and exorcisms of the shepherd movement embody both the indigenous Malagasy understanding of the authority of the oral event and the Malagasy Christian theology of the immediate, eternally present, powerfully active Word of God.

Using the categories defined by Wilson in Magic and the Millennium as “responses to
the world,” we were able to classify the Fifohazana as having a primarily thaumaturgical orientation, engaging the world with locally based responses to the questions of evil and salvation. The Fifohazana movement has attempted to disassociate the exorcisms, based on enacting the healing Word of Christ, from the indigenous, ombiasa practices of healing arts. However, the very fact of the Christian mission-rooted church’s care imposed in the work of distinguishing the Fifohazana rites from the indigenous rituals of healing speaks strongly to the parallels in meaning-making (cultural resonances) in the dominant oral culture of the Malagasy. The oral hermeneutic of the Fifohazana is evident in the preaching and praying used foundationally for the practical implementations of the Word in communal life.

Healing is certainly the central act demonstrating the Word’s effective power for the Fifohazana. Each of the revival leaders – Rainisoalambo, Ravelonjanahary, Baba Rajaofera, Rakotozandry Daniel, and Volahavana Germaine – demonstrates a close connection between the preached and powerful word and the works that attend it, especially healing. Volahavana Germaine, Nenilava, born to an ombiasa father, commissioned in her vision at Antsirabe by the leaders named above, became the most famous and influential of the Fifohazana leaders and, perhaps of all church leaders in Madagascar. Paying close attention to the hagiographic writings that share her story, presumably as she related it, and comparing it also with the events of her time, we have an insight into her “oral” theology of the active Word in preaching and prayer. Nenilava’s authorizing visions, especially those of her appropriating ‘reading’ through the ministrations of Jesus directly with white letters on a white board or a white page in letters running up and down rather than left and right are the quintessential declarations of her privileging the spoken medium. Her experiences, as read through the lens of the cultural anthropological shaman categories of Lévi-Strauss and Eliade, support the
concept that Nenilava’s ministry represents a masterful blending of Christian authority in oral, symbolic discourses that operate both out of the “oral culture” ways of reading the Christian scriptures and those of Malagasy indigenous belief structures. Most strongly, Nenilava’s theology of the Word keys the evidence of the divine, active power in the spoken Word to the evidence of the effect of the words, changing realities in the here and now. Hence, her movement privileges what biblical critics call the “Longer Ending” of the Gospel of Mark (Mark 16:9-20) and focuses on the action of God in the immediate, local context rather than the larger context of political and social transformation.

Emblematic of the victory of the Malagasy oral mindset in the Fifohazana-shaped, Malagasy church are the patterns attendant in the preaching of the so-called “Longer Ending” of Mark which, as noted above, is a canonical text privileged in the Malagasy church’s formulation and enactment of their theology of the Word, or homiletic. Using the theories of Werner Kelber, we explored the Markan addendum as an instance of the Church’s own attempt, in post-resurrection practice, to reassert the primacy of the oral word over the “literate” theology put forward by Mark’s account of the life and passion of Jesus Christ. After considering the various explanations for the enigmatic ending of Mark’s narrative with the account that the women fled in fear without delivering their message of Christ’s resurrection to the disciples, we turned to Kelber’s theory that very written-ness of the Gospel, its medium, is a parabolic re-ordering of the church’s theology of the Word which must account more for Christ’s seeming absence than for divine presence. Kelber notes that the writing and circulation of the Gospel of Mark denotes a radical change from the previously solely oral medium to the written medium to a symbolic object that can be circulated independently. Taking into account this vital shift from oral to written
communication leads to a distinct hermeneutical perspective in understanding the Markan texts.

Building on Kelber’s theory, we then examined the Longer Ending of Mark to demonstrate that there is a primacy of the oral over the literate in the appended Longer Ending. The reassertion of a fundamentally oral theology in the Longer Ending helps explain why this text is privileged in the Malagasy church and the uses which that church both has made of the text in present Malagasy homiletics and liturgical practice. Just as the added-on Markan text is demonstrably an oral response and corrective to the literate “parable of absence” interpretation of the Gospel of Mark advanced by Kelber, so also the Malagasy preaching text is shown to be often an oral response and corrective to the missionary-rooted interpretations of Christ, resurrected and ascended, as being absent in the concrete present.

Through the lens of Kelber’s “orality” indices in his study of the text of the Gospel of Mark, we noted that oral theology in the hands of the mimetically trained is maladapted to the theologia crucis so central in the faith of the suffering who yearn for reversal and resurrection. Moreover, we found that Kelber shows that the written Gospel of Mark deliberately subverts the oral synthesis that undergirds oral christology and its proclaimers. Oral hegemony yields to a complicated, reflective christology in the main body of the Gospel of Mark. After a close rereading of the second ending and supporting texts, we have shown that the added ending calls not only for commissioned speakers empowered in God’s lively name, but promises that their speech will effect the reign of God in the concrete present, even with confirming signs and wonders, and that the risen Christ promises to be fully present in this wonder-confirmed teaching and preaching. Furthermore, we have seen that in the Markan handling of the Ascension accounts, as in the Malagasy interpretation of the same,
this permanent availability of Jesus is assured by the presence of Jesus at the right hand of
God who is ubiquitous and, just so, beyond the localized, temporally limited, pre-resurrection
Jesus. For this reason, Nenilava privileged this passage, exemplifying the triumph of her oral
theology of the Word over the “literate” theologies of the missionaries. For the Malagasy,
the present, working Lord does wonders and releases power in the spoken, preached Word.

The theology of presence that emerges under the examinations of the evidence in
Chapter 3 becomes explicit in the careful close readings of the sermons prepared for the feast
of the Ascension of Our Lord, a day prominent in the Western church historically and in the
Malagasy church particularly. We explored the marks of oral or literate theologies as we
found them impacting on the exegesis and sermonic content of twenty-four Ascension Day
sermons from a cross section of Malagasy Lutheran preachers from all over the Island.
Particularly, I began with the question, “Why is the indigenous art of kabary not more
explicitly present in Malagasy preaching?” and posited that perhaps the impact of literacy
made for the effacing of kabary arts in the Church. Was the shift a matter of the clash of an
oral versus literate mindset or was it a more complex series of influences that were informing
the Malagasy homiletic?

Working from the premise that the Longer Ending of Mark is in fact a reassertion of
the primacy of oral theology, a primacy that resonates to Malagasy indigenous values, and
applying the perspectives I previously led the reader to glean from the Kelber discussion, we
examined the sermons prepared for this pericope (Mark 16:14-20). Set next to these
sermons, we examined the sermons based on the account of the resurrection, for Easter
(Mark 16:1-7), in order to examine both oratorical styles and underlying homiletical
theologies. Several unexpected data surfaced. Preachers did not address the expanded texts
as requested but stuck closely to the assigned pericopes. The absence of the additional verses
the preachers had each been asked to include for both Easter and Ascension became
significant, though in the case of the Ascension Day sermons, not critical. After reviewing
the history of the missionary training of preachers in regards to the disputed origins of the
Longer Ending, we concluded that the students were well trained, by Western standards, in
regards to the issues but were not swayed by this information in the preaching of the text.

For the seminary-trained preachers, the questions of textual status were irrelevant:
they understood that the Longer Ending was not Mark’s writing yet it remains the Word of
God. The authority of the text is not found to be based on textual studies but rather on the
use of the community and the authorizing Spirit at work in the preaching and teaching of the
contents of the Bible.

We demonstrated from the constituting documents of the Fifohazana movement in
particular the defining nature of the Longer Ending for the “Work and the Strengthening”
(exorcism ritual) of the indigenous missional movement that the Fifohazana represents.
Thus, while disappointed to discover that the Malagasy kabary flair is definitely not a key
feature of FLM preaching, nonetheless, we have demonstrated that the sermons exhibit a
truly oral theology, hinging on presence, power, contest, and the privileging of the forces of
hearing and speech acts. Concrete, sensate expression dominates the language, effacing the
use of abstractions or theoretical models. Lastly, the sermons appeal to the understanding of
the communal experience, remaining relatively silent regarding the individual personality.

Having analyzed both the Ascension Day and Easter sermons using these
characteristics of oral theology, we found that the concretizing of Christ in the practices of
the community, especially the work of the mpiandry, is a common feature, though we saw
myriad and differing ways preachers accomplish that concretization. Particularly striking were the various means of concretizing the concept of ubiquity. Moreover, we noted the preachers’ repeated uses of metonymic reference in the orally catechized, richly scriptural culture of the FLM, whereby the text has so saturated the oral, communal culture of the Malagasy church-goers that it itself is an oral “source” in daily discourse. The language, as Foley states, has ‘word-power.’ We saw this especially in the use of references to hymnody in preaching. Use of proverbs, dear to Malagasy didactic habit and to kabary, features mildly, often using biblical quotations and proverbial sayings as one might use the indigenous proverbs.

One of the most central findings was the clear indication, sermon after sermon, that the presence of Christ is the presence of power. That power comes with signs and wonders, as each sermon clearly asserts. We found further evidence of the understanding of the presence of power, not in the preaching of the Christ attested to in the text only, but also in the powerful presence of Christ revealed by framing the oral accounts and sermon illustrations with scriptural patterns. These scriptural patterns often functioned as the oral culture stylistic formulas for the storytelling of current events. Contrary to Ong’s finding that oral cultures fulminate triumphalism, the effects of power displayed in Malagasy preaching demonstrate the triumphant Word and that Word’s subsequent working in the humble hearts and hands of persons. While ample triumphalism occurs, it is rooted in Christ’s triumph. The interesting reversals we have highlighted in the sermons show a theology of the cross with a Malagasy innocence that can conceptualize even representing God as choosing the mentally unstable to shame the wise.

Among other orality marks we documented was copia. We noted particularly the
homiletical strategy that redundancy is a key tool in Malagasy preaching. Likewise, the rich use of commonplaces and proverbs denotes a similar Malagasy preferred strategy. What we have seen is the clever sermonic use of familiar Malagasy proverbs in many ways that force the hearer to reinterpret the cultural wisdom against the horizon of the Gospel, thus trimming the cultural deposit to fit the purposes of the Gospel.

All these features, both of the oral culture and of the oral theology of the Malagasy church, demonstrate to us that the compositional style of the Malagasy homiletic invites participatory understanding, a more kinesthetic and holistic grasp of the Word acting upon the hearer in community. The hearer is drawn immediately into the activity of the Word in a moment when all time is present. The more prosaic homiletical oratory, eschewing kabary flair, nonetheless makes an extraordinary claim consonant with the Malagasy oral world view: the speaker speaks an actively powerful and empowering Word that, when heard, produces real works in real time, making Christ present here and now in the hearing even while resurrected and at the right hand of God.

The second set of sermons examined, the Easter sermons, yielded further evidence of the marks of a Malagasy homiletic with its emphasis on the importance of liturgical context, the catechetical rehearsal of commonplaces, and the infrastructure of inter-textuality, as a key internal dynamic in the oral proclamation of the present Christ. Tackling the problem of the lectionary pericope that skirts the issue of the women’s fear at the empty tomb (Mark 16:8), we found a variety of treatments which overturn the “logical” interpretations of fear, recasting this feature of the account by melding it into other accounts or by referring to the fear as being of the nature of shock, awe, joy or being overwhelmed, or by contextualizing the women’s reactions by comparing the women to key leaders in the Fifohazana movement.
The one sermon addressing the theology of absence was composed by a woman who had, in fact, buried her own youngest daughter. Her proclamation became the incarnate counterpoint to the silence before the gaping grave that ultimately must give way to the bold proclamation of the risen Christ. The key tool for a Malagasy hermeneutic of such difficult texts is the recourse to interweaving of scriptural materials across the lines of separate books of the canon whereby, treating the whole Bible as a self-interpreting speech, the preachers are able to find solutions or explanations within texts beyond the text being preached. The orality of the Malagasy homiletic treats the biblical accounts in a totalizing fashion without concern for literary demarcations in the texts themselves.

We have noted that the attentive, repetitive storytelling of the biblical accounts is the primary material in proclamation in an orally based culture. Moreover, the use of juxtaposition between biblical and local stories maintains the oral quality of “agon.” In this same vein, the didactic reiteration of the meanings of the liturgical context in Malagasy preaching events rehearses and anchors the meaning and presence of God in the preaching event with the lived, current, and meaningful assembly of worshippers. Such tactics are also used to reinforce and lend coherence to the identity of specific communities in the *Fifohazana*. As in the example of the *famadihana* (turning of the bones of the dead ancestor) being addressed in Malagasy culture and recast according to Christian practices, we found evidence of preachers using indigenous materials to support discussion of the text critically or to distinguish Protestant practice from cultural norms. The use of the spoken word in assembly as a primary means of forming and reforming community and identity is a chief oral marker throughout the Malagasy sermons. Malagasy proclamation is “presence,” both in Malagasy oral culture and in the Malagasy theology of the Word; thus a theology of absence.
in the Markan texts is not tolerated however correct Kelber’s thesis may be. The evidence from the orally based culture of the Malagasy church strongly supports my theory that the Longer Ending of Mark is a deliberate attempt to mute Mark’s theology of absence with an oral theology of presence.

Moving from the demonstrated oral theology of presence exhibited in the Malagasy sermons, we examined a representative survey of homiletic textbooks in order to establish the possible external sources of and influences for the Malagasy homiletic. Literary issues of style, clarity and order of writing, and particularly Ciceronian rhetorical form, undergird the concerns explored in these Western textbooks. Surveying the debate over orality and literacy as it relates to the Roman orator Cicero, we concluded that, at their base, the structures presented in the manuals are the mental structures of a literary-format mind, both in preparation and in delivery methods. Looking at the available four Malagasy homiletics textbooks, three from the 1990’s, we found the Western manual format abbreviated and translated for the Malagasy audience. Of these, the earliest, from 1877, by a Malagasy pastor working with the London Missionary Society, uses its brief 15 pages to summarize an appeal for a somewhat more literate approach by the orally attuned indigenous preachers. We demonstrated that the author’s examples work to pull Malagasy oratorical and contextual experience into line with the categories of the classic Western manuals.

Further evidence of the strong impact of literate theologies of interpretation and preaching were gleaned from our survey of historic sermons on the Markan texts whereby we found the overriding high literate mindset that surely influenced the missionary homiletic of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Using the insights of Tex Sample, we noted that Malagasy Lutheran preaching offers a unique instance of a living traditional oral hermeneutic
in which sharp attention is focused on the present Christ in the interweaving of scriptural
worlds and local contextual worlds. Moreover, this Malagasy homiletic that presses the
preacher to proclaim a present and “agonistically” engaged God in and for the world offers to
the wider Church a fresh opportunity to reclaim the immediate and urgent quality of
preaching Christ that so distinguishes Malagasy, orally based communities of preaching. The
strength of the Malagasy orally based reality in resistance to the uniform and consistent
pressure of the Western, literary homiletic witnesses to the power that oral culture unleashes
in its practice. This urgency and the reviving power of the Malagasy approach to preaching
is an expression of the Church which bears further examination from the ecumenical and oft
times lackluster “first world” Lutheran preaching academy.

Having established the uniquely urgent sense of the presence of a powerful Christ in
the Malagasy culture of preaching, we examined my original question regarding the choices
made in the use or disregard of indigenous Malagasy kabary rhetoric. Through the frames of
establishing the meanings and associations attendant on the Malagasy technologies of
reading and writing in the sorabe texts and the technology of kabary’s formal aesthetics, we
discerned that the forms and habits of the high arts of Malagasy cultural communication do
not lend themselves inherently to the goals of the Malagasy church’s preaching. While
showing that the Malagasy privilege the book of Christians over the indigenous inheritance
of the teachings of the ancestors and the rites of the hazomanga, nonetheless, we saw that the
Malagasy reception and use of the scriptures is indeed orally structured. Writing is
objectified as a powerful presence in its own right, hence the reverence for Bibles can be
seen to be parallel to the respect earlier given to sorabe.

We documented that the Malagasy language and contextual explanations of reading
represent reading as breaking the symbols open to see what is inside, to apprehend. Building on the insights of Pier Martin Larson, we discovered that the Malagasy homiletic emerges out of a culture that adapted to the centrality of the book in the missionary presentation of Christianity but did not lose its own, distinctly oral base. A significant written literature has not emerged in Malagasy, yet the profoundly oral people have taken the missional task of preaching to heart, even to the indigenization of revival into the core life of the Protestant churches that dominate the Island.

Noting the Malagasy “idiom of selflessness” and the attention to faith and preaching as orally based events in Malagasy scriptural translation, we closely analyzed kabary history and forms in order to show that a defining mark of Malagasy rhetorical arts is the communal nature of oratory as true discourse. Relationship is central and upheld in Malagasy speech; so also in scriptural assertions regarding the hinging of faith and preaching. As our analysis of kabary’s history reveals, the cultural resonances of kabary practice, with its origins in royal governance and dialogical deference, preclude the direct import into preaching of kabary style and practice. Nonetheless, the features of Malagasy identity and the power of the spoken word inherent in the oratory excellence embedded in the resistant forms of kabary that emerged for communal occasions such as marriage and performance festivals are important values that adhere to Malagasy preaching.

The close readings of the sermons exposed the fact that the fluency of Malagasy imagination in the riddling, proverbial, and hainteny structures of the kabary “canon” is retained in the poetic, juxtaposing and totalizing of scriptures and the urgent immediacy of the community-building, identity-catechizing preaching. We have demonstrated that the cultural interface between kabary and preaching became more elastic after the nineteenth-
century period of persecution of Christians. Ultimately, however, kabary’s chief marks of dialogical, conflictual, governing, and proverb-based underpinnings disallowed its direct import into Christian homiletical practice. Kabary failed the tests of inculturation, at least directly, in the eyes of Malagasy Christian preachers. Kabary cannot be used to re-express the Christ of the biblical and sacramental canon directly. Yet its high arts call the wider church to re-imagine the tasks of preaching as an oral, creative, and local art form.

Moreover, its emphasis on the communitarian nature of preaching enlivens the Malagasy church and could also prophetically enrich the global church. Chiefly, the insight that the Malagasy culture of preaching calls outsiders to witness their understanding that words “break” and that, for Christians, words break at the foot of the Cross of Christ which announces the limit of human innovation and the threshold of the self-declaring, self-speaking and present God.

The very nature of Malagasy rhetoric as communal and powerful and identity-forming resonates to the preached good news that the hearer who receives the saving greeting of God, risen and bringing in the dominion of God, is brought into a new community, indeed into a new being, and lives powerfully into this identity by enacting the Word in ordinary, daily contexts where Christ is present in love of neighbor and worship of God.

The Western church, engaged and engrossed in the technologies of the written word that have brought it deep reflection, needs now the witness of those engaged and engrossed in the living world of sound, speaking and listening to each other and to God that the church might be brought to passionate action.
Appendix 1: Questionnaires

Questionnaire on Preaching

Fanontaniana:

1. Rahefa manomana toriteny ianao inona avy no ampiasainao matetika:
   a. Baiboly
      Teny Malagasy       ____
      Teny Grika sy Hebreo ____
      Teny Frantsay       ____
      Teny Anglisy        ____
      Teny hafa           ____
      Misy fehezanteny?    ____
   b. Commentaire
      Commentaire biblika vita printy    ____
      Cahier-n’ny STPL/SALT            ____
      Mitoria Ny Teny (I-II-III)        ____
      Hafa                              ____

2. Rehefa manao toriteny ianao dia manoratra ve…
   Manuscript          ____
   Noty fotsiny        ____
   Tsy manoratra       ____

3. Inona no tanjon’ny toriteny ataoao matetika?
   Fampiononana  ____
   Fampianarana
      • etika          ____
      • dogmatika     ____
      • fanazavana baiboly   ____
   Famporisihina
      • hamoaka demonia ____
      • hitory teny     ____
      • hanoa tafika masina ____
      • hafa            ____

4. Tao amin’ny STPL na teto amin’ny SALT, efa nianatra ny momba ny Marka toko faha-16 fa misy ny manam-pahaizana be izay tsy mino fa Marka no mpanoratra 9-20?

5. Iza no mpitoriteny mahay indrindra renao? Inona no antony itiavanao ny toriteny nataony?
6. Inona no fahasamihafana amin’ny toritenin’ny Pastora/teolojiana sy ny mpiandry araka ny hevitrao?

7. Mahazo “feedback” amin’ny toriteny ataonao ve ianao? _________ Raha eny dia miseho ahoana ilay feedback?

**Fananavana:**


Mitovy amin’izany dia ataovy torieny amin’ny Mk 16:9-20. Tokony hiseho ao koa ny momba 9-14. Nahoana, ho an’ny mpanoratra (na Marka na olon-kafa) i Maria Magdelana no nahazo ny fitsidihan’ny Tompo voalohany? Inona no maha-sarobidy ny famoahana demonia, fansisitrana, fisotroana pozizina, sns?

Rehefa vita ireo toriteny (iray isaky ny face) dia mba omeo ireny amin’ny Gestionairen’ny SALT. Misy fisaorana kely homeny anao koa avy amiko.

** Fifanekena:**

Azoko fa manampy an’i Pastora Kevin A. Ogilvie, misioneran’ny ELCA eto Madagasikara amin’ny fikarohana ataony hahazoany ny marim-pahaizana dokotora. Noho izany dia omeko azy alalana hampiasa ny toriteny sy renseignement na amin’ny theske amin’ny boky na amin’ny artikla mety hosoratany aty aorina.

Hoy,

_________________________________________ ________________________
sonia ambony

_________________________________________
Questions:

1. When you are preparing a sermon what are all the (resources) which you use?
   a. Bible
      Malagasy ______
      Greek/Hebrew ______
      French ______
      English ______
      Other ______
      Chain reference ______
   b. Commentaries
      Biblical commentaries in print ______
      Seminary notebooks ______
      Preach the Word I, II or III ______ (Known preaching resource)
      Other ______

2. When you prepare a sermon do you write…
   Manuscript ______
   Only notes ______
   Do not write ______

3. What, often, is the goal of your sermon?
   Comfort ______
   Teaching ______
      ▪ Ethical ______
      ▪ Dogmatic ______
      ▪ Biblical explanation ______
      ▪ Exhortation ______
      ▪ Exorcism of demons ______
      ▪ Preach ______
      ▪ Do evangelism ______
      ▪ Other ______

4. At the regional seminary or at the graduate seminary, did you study Mark 16, for there are professors who do not believe that Mark is the writer of 9-20?

5. Who is the best preacher you have heard? Why do you like his/her preaching?

6. What, in your opinion, is the difference between a pastor or woman theologian’s preaching and a shepherd’s?

7. Do you get feedback on the sermons you preach? ______ If yes, how does it appear?
Explanation:

I am very interested in your understanding of the texts Mark 16:1-8 and Mark 16:9-20. In the Lectionary of the MLC these are Easter and Ascension Day, Year I except verse 8 is not there and neither are verses 9-14. This was a choice of those who arranged the Lectionary and it is believed there was a theological reason for it. For example, verse 8 is difficult.

Because you are students at the Graduate Lutheran Theological School, you are believed to have strong abilities and so are ready to “wrestle” with the Word of God. I am looking for two sermons. The first (sermon) is to be done on Mark 16:1-8. The meaning of verse 8 should be explained in the sermon. What does it mean for us Christians? There must be [an explanation] because it is the Word of God. What is the meaning of the silence of the women for us? What stopped them from completing the assignment the angel gave them?

In the same way, prepare a sermon on Mark 16:9-20. Verses 9-14 should appear. Why for the writer (Mark or another) did Mary Magdalene receive the first visit from the Lord? What makes the exorcism of demons, healing, drinking poison, etc., important?

Agreement:

I understand that I am helping Pastor Kevin Ogilvie, missionary of the ELCA here in Madagascar, in his attempt to get a doctoral degree. Therefore, I give him permission to use the sermons and the information either in his thesis or in a book or article that he might write afterwards.

Says,

__________________________

Sign above the line          Date

__________________________

Name printed clearly
Questions for Preachers

1. What is your method of preparation?

2. Do you have access to commentaries, school notebooks, *Mitoria ny Teny*?

3. I am struck by your emphasis upon signs and sermons. Can you give me some insight into your thinking? What place does exorcism have in the validation of preaching? What about snakes and poison?

4. How do you integrate the rest of Mark 16?
Appendix 2: Release

Agreement regarding the reception of a radio/cassette

I understand that I am helping with research regarding sermons in the Malagasy Lutheran Church. Pastor Kevin Ogilvie, a missionary of the ELCA in Madagascar, is researching the ways the Word of God is preached here in Madagascar. He is interested in the use of the lectionary for Easter, year 1 [Mark 16:1-7(8)], and Ascension Day, year 1 [Mark 16: (9-13) 14-20]. In order to help him in the research he is doing I accept the following:

1. To preach on Easter and Ascension Day on the assigned lectionary texts in the manner that I am used to.
2. To use the radio/cassette given me to make a recording of the sermons I preach on those days.
3. To send to Pastor Kevin Ogilvie the cassettes when the sermons have been done on those days.
4. To give him permission to use the sermons I do in the writing of his thesis and in the research he is doing to receive a doctorate or in a book or article he may write thereafter.
5. I understand that by respecting the above conditions then the radio cassette given me is mine.

According to the above, I certify that I have accepted the agreement and have received these things:

1 radio/cassette, mark AIWA model: CS P500
2 cassette tapes, Memorex 90 min.
8 AA batteries

Says,

_____________________________ Date: ____________________________
Sign above the line

_____________________________
Print name clearly

Place: __________________________________________

Signature and seal of Pastor Kevin A. Ogilvie:

_____________________________
for appendices 3-5 (Ascension Day and Easter sermons), please see Volume II
Appendix 6: Annual Meeting Sermon

Mama Volahavana Germaine, *Nenilava*

August 2, 1976

Izay hanozarana, izay hitsarana ny namana no hitsaran’Andriamanitrany, hitsaran’i Jesosy eo anoloan’ny ftisarana, tsy maintsy amin’ny andro fotoana tsy hangatahan’andro hanamelohana izay rehetra namanamaka ny namany ka tsy afaka hivavaka ho azy.


---

fahamarinana, omeo ahy ny fahamasinana, omeo ahy ny fanetren-tena ao Jesosy, omeo ahy ny fanahinao, omeo ahy ny fahamasinana, omeo ahy ny fanahinao, omeo ahy ny fanetren-tena.


fahataperan’izao tontolo izao? Ho anao tokonain’i Jesosy. Anio dia hanompo anao aho mandrapatatongan’ny fahataperan’izao tontolo izao, raha misy manohitra ny tenin’Andriamanitra dia manohitra ny vato mikodiadia hatrany amin’ny tendrombohitra izy, izay hianjerany dia toro sy mongo, mongo tanteraka; sao misalasala ianao amin’ny foly aho, amin’ny sainao aho, amin’ny fieritireretanao aho, amin’ny fiainanao, tsarovy fa Jesosy niteny: « Aza matahotra fa homba anao Aho »...

The one who compares himself, who judges a friend is the one who will be judged by our God, (who) will be judged by Jesus there before the judgment, one must await the time without asking for (extra) days condemning everyone who condemns their neighbor and cannot pray for him.

O brethren in the Lord, look at them that are not able to tell to themselves that judgment, because you know well and you have well considered the judgment of those who brag, people who are haughty, put themselves up, who say they are something, say they are really above, who say of themselves, “I am it” but they are not, rather they are a synagogue of Satan; a synagogue of Satan. Jesus sees that; knows that.

Remember your judgment of that neighbor of yours, that condemnation of your neighbor bears witness, it stands there. What do you think about your approach to Jesus on that day? He will come! He will come! He will come next to you. He will come to your household. He will come on the way that you travel for your preaching of the gospel. He will come on every way that you go to announce the Word of God. If you are for example a speaker of curses, if you are a speaker of evil, if you are one who says that the one who really speaks evil to a neighbor saying “that sinner” I gave “this word,” then you too are already judged by God along with that.

What does Jesus love? Love! Love! He said also: “Don’t give to the dogs...” Who is that dog Jesus speaks about? He’s making an example of us, here in front of us. Who is the dog that Jesus speaks of, who? Who is that pig he speaks of? He uses the word that causes Malagasy to be completely disgusted, it causes them to be disgusted this example of the dog! But Jesus said to that woman, “It is not right to give the children’s bread to the puppies.” He said puppies in order to humble, to leave self-aggrandizing. Who does Jesus think is that dog? Who? We think that it is because the dog does not believe. That is not the idea of Jesus. We think it is because the dog knows nothing. It is not that at all. Here it is: fully remember that he is there in front of you, there in front of you. Remember who is it that is in front of you? Who is that in front of you? Who is it? You preach in vain, you speak in vain: Do not take the name of the Lord your God in vain! For Jehovah considers those who take his name as not having blame: because you are on the road then “O repent! Do you know Jesus? Are you acquainted with Jesus?” That’s not preaching the gospel. Lead gently for that is what Jesus did for the Samaritan woman. He didn’t shake that Samaritan woman but coaxed, kissing her and at the same time speaking completely with wisdom...You already see your friend: “Ah! That one doesn’t believe!” That one up there doesn’t have the Spirit of God,” “That one really has a low mentality.” “That one truly has no understanding.” That’s not what Jesus needs, not that, Jesus does not seek for the righteous but for sinners, sinners are who he needs, humble people, humble people, people who understand themselves to be lower than their friends, that is what Jesus needs, that is what he needs.

Remember, I am also obligated, you, I ask with wisdom; do not ask in vain for something that is not suited for you. Do I ask saying, “I am not very capable so make me a missionary?!?” Isn’t that begging in vain? If someone like this asks that thing, “I would like to be president.” Isn’t that someone who steals the glory of God? “I would like to be like this or like that.” Jesus doesn’t need it.
but your request should be simple. “Give me your righteousness; give me your holiness; give me your humility, Jesus; give me your Spirit; give me your glory, Christ. If he is willing, he will give it to you.

The work of Jesus, that is my own, that is what I need, that is what I ask for. If I ask for something saying, “I must be like this, that is what I need, I must be given glory!” You who put yourself up will be humbled there at the last lock up. “Ask and you shall receive,” he says. What you want to ask from Jesus is wealth? Lots of money? Glory? A child you don’t have? What is being asked for? What I ask for from you Jesus is wisdom; wisdom first is what I need from you so that I can preach your name with wisdom. That is what I ask, love. Patience that is what I need, that is what I ask from you Jesus. I cry for that every day, O Jesus! I groan to the lord every day saying, “Give me this love, give me this humility, give me this, Jesus. I don’t need glory. I don’t need it. If I have honor then I am haughty with my neighbor, “ Who is as high as I am? Who? Who is like me? If someone has something to give, who is like me? If there is something I can accomplish in the church, who is like me? If I am not there, then the church won’t finish all its business.no one else will,” says the person to all the elders, those who lead, the secretaries of the church. Jesus doesn’t need this but you will knock, if Jesus knocks, whoever bids him welcome then “I will come and dine with him,” says Jesus, “I will live with him; I will reside with him. He will reign with me.” That is what Jesus says, if he knocks and you ask truly for love.

But now remember those five foolish virgins and five wise; they knocked because their faith was completely exhausted. Lazy people? Lazy people? There is nothing they should hope for from Jesus, they run in vain to the door of heaven but they don’t get in because of what they did, their fire went out, their strength died, their faith died. And those who waited? They did not sample sin, they didn’t sample anything, lies and deceit. They entered together into the kingdom of Christ. Behold Jesus leads them. That’s how it is.

He threw out those five foolish virgins. They were not worthy to enter there for they were dirty. They were not worthy to enter there because they were evil. They were not worthy to enter there because they puffed themselves up. They were not worthy to enter there because they said they were something. “Not worthy to enter! Not worthy to enter!” said the One who has all the power in heaven, that is the true judge, that is Christ who would not let them in as they hoped. They hoped in vain because there is nothing that they had to do there for Jesus. Remember, even you, he said, who know how to do things: your child asks you, “Give me bread, Dad.” Then what? You give him stone? Isn’t that one a deciever? Even up to your child to whom you gave birth and who is your blessing, you give stone! You give him something to eat, meat or something else. You give him a serpent? That’s the sum of your of your ancestors until now? They ate that?

Please consider this, those of you about to be set apart [as shepherds in the awakening movement]: you cannot give serpents to people who beg to you for Jesus! Give them Jesus, don’t give them lies! Don’t give them deception. That is the snake. Don’t give them bad things or empty words or bad words. Don’t give them that for God cannot abide it!

Remember then, this is what Jesus is doing to you right now here. How many times did your relatives ask of you and you gave? Huh? How many times did your brother beg and you gave? Even clothes off your back? Huh? That’s it!

Now another thing: respect for your holy clothing [robes used by the shepherds]. Do not throw to the dogs the holy clothes. Now, the devil is a dog, there inside the person, that truly tears the Word of God, making nothing of Jesus Christ.

“Do not throw to the pigs your gems,” he said. He tears. He shoots you if you speak idly saying: “Do you believe? Do you believe? Are you a servant of God? Do you know Jesus?” It must be with respect with the giving of honor that you lead the people but not with haughtiness, not words
of puffing up yourself, not with meaningless words but this: Love, gentleness of spirit, with
gentleness of spirit you can coax them for then they will not be turned the wrong way but able to
accept completely that Jesus is our savior. Remember, then, you who are about to be set apart. The
Word is for you; for you, for me is the Word. I have been judged today. I wonder if you think about
it if you might say, “I have been judged today, in my heart, in my mind, in my thoughts, then this: Do
speech?” Or whose is he? If I remain with another then I am lost forever, completely lost. There is
no salvation for me if it is the devil who is there; if Satan is there; if haughtiness and the puffing up of
the dark one is there. Then I will die and not see the heaven fulfilled. I can trust that I will not see it!
I will not see it! But if love, on the other hand, is there then the heavens are wide open to you.
“Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit eternal life!” says Jesus the Lord of Peace.

The strength of the Lord, the grace of Christ, and his peace are for all of us, because we are
people who have received forgiveness today, even if we have been judged Jesus says, “Your sins are
forgiven.” Consider that! “Don’t be afraid!” he says, “I am with you until the end of the age.”

This is a great thing. Can our minds imagine the end of the world? For you? A promise
given by Jesus? Today then forgive until the coming of the end of the world. If there is one who
would oppose the Word of God then he opposes a stone rolling down a mountain, the one on whom it
falls will be smashed and crushed, utterly crushed. Lest you hesitate in your heart, in your mind, in
your thoughts, in your life, remember that Jesus says, “Don’t be afraid, I am with you.”

O holy God, O powerful God, O trustworthy God, O Lord our God, O God the root of our
understanding, remember these meeting here. O God, lest they go home dry and their hearts grow
cold and they say, “I didn’t get Jesus in this place,” each person is full of poverty, they are full of
poverty, full of sadness, full of grief! Redeem them, Jesus to be holy, to be holy, in the strength of
holiness. Give them the Holy Spirit, O Christ. Give them that, O Lord. Give to them. Nurse their
heart, O Lord. Warm them with holy fire that they might receive forgiveness, that they might receive
love, receive endurance. Remember these your people, O God. Remember to pray for their names,
remember to pray for their brothers, to beg for their sisters, to remember to ask for their elders, to
remember to ask for each of the households of the people of Madagascar here, Jesus, for the people
across the sea. Give them all that we ask. We busy ourselves with prayer for that, O Jesus. Help us,
O Christ! For it is you who already sets apart and carries and oversees all who believe you. O
Savior, you must come lest you sleep and are distracted, must beg because you don’t have. O Christ,
be with us, bless, give strength to the glory of your name alone. Wrap us in your holiness that we
might receive your strength. In the name of Jesus we ask that now and forever. Amen.
Appendix 7: Appropriation of Cultural Symbol – Nenilava

In August 1983, the members of the Ankaramalaza branch of the Fifohazana movement followed Nenilava’s descriptions of how she said Jesus saw her. They sewed vestments and made a crown of silver and, at a special service, she appeared before the congregation so arrayed. The picture to the left is of that occasion. According to Rabehatonina James, there was great controversy around the crown, especially the money spent on it. The vestments, according to him, were to be reminders of an Old Testament High Priest.

Silver is often the royal precious metal in Madagascar.

Figure 7: The "Setting Apart" of Volahavana Germaine. Unknown photographer.

The last monarch of an independent Malagasy state was Queen Ranavalona III. She reigned from 1885 to 1896. Note the Bible prominently displayed at her right hand.

Figure 8: Queen Ranavalona III (NMS Archives)
**Glossary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ala sarona</td>
<td>introduction in an oration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>andriana</td>
<td>noble class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>angano</td>
<td>fairy tale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ankafidy</td>
<td>riddle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ankamantatra</td>
<td>riddle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apostoly</td>
<td>apostle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asa sy famaherezana</td>
<td>lit.: work and strengthening, exorcism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aza fady</td>
<td>removal of taboos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baiboly</td>
<td>Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fady</td>
<td>taboo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fafy</td>
<td>lit.: sprinkling, or sacrificial ritual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>famadihana</td>
<td>lit.: turning, ritual of the turning of the ancestors' bones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>famaky</td>
<td>axe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fanampoana</td>
<td>forced labor or service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fananana</td>
<td>possessions, belongings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fanatsafana</td>
<td>testing to see if one can begin a speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fatidrà</td>
<td>blood-brother' ritual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feon'ny polipitra</td>
<td>pulpit tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fialan-tsiny</td>
<td>removal of blame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fiangonana</td>
<td>church, assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fifohazana</td>
<td>lit.: awakening, or revival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fihavanana</td>
<td>relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fitia-tsy-mba-hetra</td>
<td>contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fivavahana</td>
<td>prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hainteny</td>
<td>poetry based upon proverbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hasina</td>
<td>sacred power, holiness, respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hazomanga</td>
<td>sacred post for sacrifice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hen'omby</td>
<td>beef</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>henan-jamoka</td>
<td>beef</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hetra</td>
<td>tax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hira gasy</td>
<td>public, traditional exhibitions of song, dance, and oration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
iraka  messenger or figuratively: apostle
kabary  formal public oration
kabary vodiondry  lit.: sheep's rump oration, marriage discourse
katibo  scribe writing Arabic script
kitapo  pouch for holding important papers, money
lagaly  scabies
laissez-passer  French: permit, visa
mahay  able, capable
mamaky  to chop
mamaky teny  to read
Marambasia  courtier to the kings of Isandra, Betsileo
Matitanana  valley on the central east coast of Madagascar
mibebaka  to repent
mieboebo  to show pride
migogogogo  to sob
mitomany  to cry, weep
mpaminany  prophet
mpanjaka  king or queen, ruler
Mpianatry ny Tompo  Disciples of the Lord, specifically of Soatanana revival
mpiandry  lit.: one who waits, or shepherd
mpikabary  orator
mpimasy  traditional healer, medicine man
mpino  believer
mpisikidy  diviner
mpivavaka  lit.: one who prays, adherent to Christianity
Ntaolo  Community of ancestors outside named memory
ody  talisman, traditional medicine
ohabolana  proverb
ombiasa  traditional healer, medicine man
papa -ko, -nay  father (my) (our)
ray aman-dreny  lit.: father-and-mother, elder
razana  ancestor(s)
resaka  ordinary conversation
sikidy  divining instruments, lots
solompitandrina  pastoral associate, catechist
sorabe  Malagasy written in Arabic script
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>soratra, (var.: soratsy)</td>
<td>writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tantaran'ny Andriana</td>
<td>History of the Nobles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teny an-kolaka</td>
<td>winding words, indirect speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>theologia crucis</td>
<td>Latin: theology of the cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>theologia gloriae</td>
<td>Latin: theology of glory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tobolehibe</td>
<td>main revival center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toby</td>
<td>lit.: encampment, or revival center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tody</td>
<td>lit.: return home, cosmic justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toky</td>
<td>confidence, trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tompon-tany</td>
<td>master of the land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tompon-teny</td>
<td>master of the word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsindrimandry</td>
<td>vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsiny</td>
<td>blame, censure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vadin-tany</td>
<td>lit.: spouse of the land, governor or royal agent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vakinankaratra</td>
<td>Southern section of Imerina, northern Betsileo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vazimba</td>
<td>ancient inhabitants of Imerina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viva vox evangeli</td>
<td>Latin: living voice of the gospel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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**Interviews**


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1 For an explanation of Malagasy naming practices, as used in this Works Cited list, see p. vii n1.


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BREAKING WORDS:
TOWARDS A MALAGASY ORAL THEOLOGY OF HOMILETICS

By

Kevin Ahnfeldt Ogilvie

Submitted in fulfillment of the academic requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Religion and Theology,
University of Kwazulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg, South Africa

2010

Supporting Documentation

Supervisor

Professor Jonathan Draper
# Table of Contents

## Appendix 3: Ascension Day Sermons with Translation  
1. Raharison ................................................................................................................. 1  
1. Raharison (Translation) .............................................................................................. 5  
2. Loubiens Fidinantenaina Claudias ............................................................................... 9  
2. Loubiens Fidinantenaina Claudias (Translation) .......................................................... 14  
3. Georges .................................................................................................................... 19  
3. Georges (Translation) ............................................................................................... 21  
8. Dada Rajosoa ........................................................................................................... 23  
8. Dada Rajasoa (Translation) .......................................................................................... 27  
10. Rakotonomenanahary Danielson .............................................................................. 32  
10. Rakotonomenanahary Danielson (Translation) ........................................................... 38  
14. Rakotoniaina Jean de Dieu ....................................................................................... 44  
14. Rakotoniaina Jean de Dieu (Translation) .............................................................. 47  
17. Rasolomanahary Rodin Emmanuël ........................................................................... 50  
17. Rasolomanahary Rodin Emmanuël (Translation) ................................................... 53  
21. Randrianirina Dieu Donné ......................................................................................... 55  
21. Randrianirina Dieu Donné (Translation) ................................................................. 61  
30. Raharinomenjanahary Léonie Charline ................................................................. 66  
30. Raharinomenjanahary Léonie Charline (Translation) ........................................... 71  

## Appendix 4: Additional Ascension Day Sermons  
5. Randriatsarafara Jean Gaston ................................................................................. 76  
7. Randrianyndrasana Dieu Donné ............................................................................... 78  
11. Davidson .................................................................................................................. 84  
12. Masitsara Raymond ............................................................................................... 87  
13. Laha Jean Noël ....................................................................................................... 91  
15. Rahantanirina Vastyor ......................................................................................... 95  
16. Andrianantoandro Léon Fidèle .......................................................................... 97  
18. Randrianymadetrafo Solofoson Gilbert .............................................................. 102  
19. Ranarivazava Samuël Jonah ............................................................................... 105  
22. Mampitohy Elia ................................................................................................... 108  
25. Rakotoarjaona F. ................................................................................................. 115  
26. Andrianjafy O. B. ............................................................................................... 118  
27. Ranivomiarana R. F. ............................................................................................ 121  
28. Rabaritsotra ....................................................................................................... 124  

## Appendix 5: Easter Sermons  
2. Loubiens Fidimananantenena Claudias .................................................................. 126  
3. Georges .................................................................................................................. 131  
5. Randriatsarafara Jean Gaston ............................................................................. 133  
6. Randrianaivo Jean Chrysotom ........................................................................ 138
Appendix 6: Annual Meeting Sermon
Appendix 3: Ascension Day Sermons with Translation

1. Raharison


1
voalohan’ny mpianatra dia mandeha mitory ny filazantsara amin’ny olombelona rehetra, ary any am-pitoriana ny filazantsara no anamarinian’i Jesosy azy ireo amin’ny teny am-pitarika amin’ny filazantsara azy dia indrisky dia lasa voafehin’ny rindrina efaetra ka miantsa olona toy ny dokotera hotsaboiana ao am-piangonana, fa tsy mandeha mitory ny filazantsara hiaona amin’ny marary eny tontolo eny. Ity tenin’Andriamanitra ity no manambara amintsika mivantana fa ny asantsika fiangonana dia ny fitoriana ny filazantsara.


Voninahitra anie ho an’Andriamanitra Ray Zanaka ary Fanahy Masina izay hatramin’ny taloha indrindra ka ho mandrakizay Amen.
1. Raharison (Translation)

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

When Jesus was arrested then the faith of the disciples died along with that arrest of Jesus, and when Jesus rose from the dead this is the first thing he did: he returned the disciples faith to them, showing himself in the breaking of the bread in the manner he established all that, and so they really did believe that this was the Lord. For forty days Jesus showed himself to his disciples, and when this time came, as it is said in the Word of God then Jesus ascended into heaven. The ascension of Jesus is clear according to the epistle [lesson] just read from Acts chapter one verse nine. “And when Jesus said this, he was lifted up. And while they still were watching, there was a cloud that carried him and they no longer saw him.” That is the way of ascension, we shouldn’t research it deeply and in various ways as this is clear, their was a cloud that carried him and they didn’t see him any longer. Here it is clear that being with Jesus is no longer in the body because they didn’t see him with their eyes but with faith. Faith is the way to see Jesus and that indeed is what brought Jesus to give blame to his disciples because of their disbelief and their hardness of heart: they didn’t believe when they saw him how much more so when they don’t see him. This faith therefore is the tool and root of the life of the disciples in the following, [this faith] in Jesus after his resurrection and ascension into heaven. What should not be forgotten in the word of God: when Jesus left he gave a message and the message sent these disciples into the whole world to preach the gospel not to a certain few types of people or certain few classes of people but to every person. It was announced with that that the disciple shouldn’t just gape at the sky when Jesus ascended but go and preach the good news to all people. And there Jesus gave signs to the disciples by which they would know that Jesus was with them. These are the signs:

- The disciples will drive out demons in Jesus’ name;
- they will speak in languages that they don’t yet know;
- they will handle snakes and even if they drink something poisonous, says the word of Jesus, it won’t affect them;
- they will place their hands on the sick and they will be healed.

So the disciples went and preached in the world and Jesus demonstrated that he worked with them by making true the words concerning him.

Dear Christians, Jesus ascended into heaven, the disciples followed Jesus from the time of his ascension into heaven by faith, not by seeing Jesus anymore but by faith and that faith they proclaimed, the faith in Jesus who died and was raised from the dead and ascended into heaven.

That was what the disciples of Jesus did when Jesus left and ascended into heaven. The disciples went and preached in the world. It is well if we Christians here in Andranovakay do not forget that. That which has caught the church today is forgetting that going and preaching the gospel to all people is the work of the church. That is the mark of a living church. If the church does not preach the gospel, that announces the death of that church. What also we should not forget from this word of God, the Word of God received by the Malagasy Lutheran Church establishing the ‘work and strengthening’[1], the words that the shepherds[2] know ‘by heart’ as the saying goes or by recitation.

Shepherds know this and the shepherds should know the ordering and the performance by the shepherds of this message of Jesus. The disciples went and preached the word to the whole world. The first mission of the disciples was to preach the word to every person and while they were preaching the gospel Jesus would validate them in their word with the signs that they were with him.

What happens now here in our church today, the signs go first and there is almost no place for the preaching of the gospel to all people. And even the revival which is thought to be the leader in the preaching of the gospel is bounded by the four walls and calls people in to be treated as if they were a doctor treating in the church but don’t go out to preach the gospel meeting with the sick in the world. This word of God announces to us directly that our work in the church is the proclamation of the Gospel. And that preaching of the Word of God causes our faith to be founded. We know well that it says in Romans that faith comes by preaching, and if our faith is weak then we should be eager to preach and listen to sermons, and when we see that the disciples or our friends’ faith is somewhat weak then there isn’t anything but sermons, the preaching of Christ alone, that is the medicine which will heal disbelief. Do not forget that disbelief troubles the Jesus in whom we believe and this prevents us from doing the work of Jesus. Remember, dearly assembled, that we are people who believe in Jesus, and this is the work of people who believe in Jesus: preaching the Gospel. If we look at Luke chapter 4 verses 18-19, then preaching repeats there: preaching freedom to the poor, preaching the word of Jehovah’s favor, that is the real work of Jesus. Do we do this?

The Christian life is cause for thinking these days. It is as if they don’t remember that preaching is work. Once when I was coming to administer the Lord’s Supper like this here in Andranovaky, I was still called by several other Christians. The reason: there was a death in the town. When I asked if the person were a Christian, this is the answer I got, “a detested Gentile!” So I put a question, did you, his relatives who have come to attend the death, already preach to him the gospel during the days in which he was still alive? Did you preach to him because he is a person? They didn’t speak nor did they respond. The big picture which this shows is this, the death of the Gentiles around them means nothing to Christians. It is well that the Church know that the Gentiles were placed close to them by God so that they might be preached to. The church ought not to think of what makes a “despised Gentile” but consider the love of God for him and he will become a child beloved by him having eternal life like the Christian. There is no argument that the bad things that this person did fleeted through the mind of this person and there is no argument that there is no strength under the sun that can remind this person of the wrong he has done but God. And so I am somewhat hesitant to speak for these Christians were not troubled there by the death of Gentiles around them. And so the word of God in Ezekiel 3:18 is clear: “and I say to the evil ones that you will die in your sins anyway but you who do not advise the evil ones will die in their sins anyway but I will reckon their blood to you.” This Christians should remember, God will reckon to us the blood of these Gentile people around us who died in their sins because we didn’t preach to them. It is a big thing that we remember we are preachers of the Gospel. This is why Jesus placed us here and I indeed accept that preaching the gospel is difficult. When it happens that we have an evangelist in the northern region the neighbors still don’t accept him. The town like Antanamarina responds simply, “we won’t receive or allow the evangelist to live here.” The person responsible is tempted saying he can be reported to the government because it is the right of Malagasy to live anywhere in Madagascar, but that is not the gospel but endurance and perseverance done by Jesus in life and the preaching of the gospel and so we place our trust and pray to make the locks on the town soft, the locks on the town I say, and the gospel can enter there. The preaching of the gospel is difficult but don’t forget that Jesus is along, Jesus works with the preaching of the Gospel. Jesus shows signs to

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2 Trained lay leaders in the revival movement who vest and are usually the presiding ministers at an exorcism.

3 “Gentile” is the word used by Malagasy Christians, in general, to speak of those who are not Christian.
the believer that he works with him. When one of the evangelists was sick and was thought to be about to die the people spoke out and advised him to leave the house so he would not die in the house, then the person not Christian had already accepted that their family were killed by them with that Jesus of theirs, and so there was a big discussion in the village. With that the Christians, the wife of the evangelist and two Christians in the town did not cry but kneeled and called upon the name of Jesus taking turns praying. When they had taken turns praying there then those cursed by the non-Christians themselves along the side, “I will pray. See if Pastor Laba is alive,” (for that is what they called that evangelist,) “I will pray this one alive.” Well imagine their astonishment when after three hours of wrestling by these few people in prayer Jesus showed his glory, Jesus showed that he worked with them and as like gentle rain the life of the evangelist returned so the neighbors accepted and there are those today who have entered to pray. This is big thing and we preachers should sense that there is nothing to fear in preaching because Jesus works with us and if Jesus is ascended into heaven according to our creed to judge the living and the dead afterwards. Do not forget, O beloved Christians, we will be judged by what we did not do. This is indeed what happened to those people who met with Jesus, “I was in prison and you didn’t visit me; hungry and you did not feed me.” It is not what we have done for which we will be judged but that which we did not do. If we do not preach the gospel will be judged for that, so also we should do as the person-in-charge the work of preaching the gospel.

There were in the portion of churches I visited those who say that where that Pastor Raharison is concerned, he doesn’t do anything but go around and preach the gospel, that is what they repeat. Here the message of Jesus is clearly underlined, “go preach to the word to everyone, you will not work alone, says Jesus, “there will be signs by which you will know that I work with you, drive out demons, speak in unknown languages, or drink deadly things even, nothing bad will happen.”

I offer a small story:

When going to do evangelism in the region of Madirovalo there was a person lagging behind among those doing evangelism for we were still going by foot then, and together camped next to a water source and prepared the food. This region of Ambatoboeny has a lot of fish, and so a big tilapia was the meal then. When the meal was ready and those eating called then this person showed his ability because they knew that this fellow was a diviner. Then the prayer was said and everyone ate. When the diviner looked at the person he intended to have choke according to the carrying out of orders which he given regarding the ‘medicine,’ he was surprised because the person did not choke. When he was encouraged to eat, eat the portion of rice that was his, there was no deadly ‘medicine’ at all. To their astonishment, he took just one bite and choked. When he choked those doing evangelism did not hesitate but worked immediately. When they worked a strong bone of the fish popped out, [the fellow’s] mouth was already full of blood. When the bone was free, the man was able to speak well saying, “your God is truly strong. I put poison in that man’s rice and the disaster came here to me.” That is the sign that Jesus does for his disciples who preaching the gospel go into this world. This is the way in which Jesus shows that he works with the disciples, he works with the church, he works with the people he sends. Jesus does not change yesterday today or ever. Jesus healed, Jesus gave what was needed to protect from disaster. That is our Jesus; he works with us.

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4 Literally, ‘pray-ers.’
5 Matthew 25:41-46
6 Literally, ‘holy war.’
7 Litterally a mpimasy or one who makes things holy, one who knows about potions and poisons.
8 Hebrews 13:8
So what is the message given to you here in Andranovaky on this Ascension Day? None other than not to forget that this is the day that Jesus left a message, go into the world and preach the Gospel, O Christians. This is the first work of the gospel. Don’t be afraid for he works with us, “Behold I am with you always to the close of the age,”⁹ “go preach the gospel to all the people”¹⁰ for that is the reason for the church, that is the reason spoken by the Apostle Peter, “you on the other hand’ – in Christ, in the Church – “are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people chosen by God for himself, in order that you might proclaim the goodness of him who called you out of darkness into his incredible light.”¹¹

The people who go to preach the gospel do not need to be experts in Holy Scripture, but say rather what God did for them. If there is one who says that he is not good at preaching then he does not sense the good God has done for him. Don’t forget that. And so on this Ascension Day I both leave a message so that you will not forget that this is a church day. According to the discussion I had with the catechist, he didn’t think we would have services today at all but you said “But you will come here on your way to Benikotro, and so we prepared to pray because there would be Holy Communion because the Secretary of Evangelism would pass by. That is to say the departure point of the church here in Andranovaky, the Pericopes were arranged for Ascension Day. When considered then it was forgotten what brought Jesus to the right hand of God, our belief in Jesus. Forgotten was the command of Jesus sending us into the world to preach the gospel to all people. Forgotten was [the fact] when we work in the preaching of the gospel God validates us with signs consonant with that work. And so that God Jesus sent to us to enliven our faith because only he is the one who gives and increases faith according to the prayer of the Apostles, “increase our faith”¹² and may he with the strength of that faith encourage us not to sleep but to preach the gospel to everyone.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and will be forever. Amen.

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⁹ Matthew 28:20b
¹⁰ Mark 16:15
¹¹ 1 Peter 2:9
¹² Luke 17:5
2. Loubiens Fidinantenaina Claudias


Ry Ray masina ò manamasina anay amin’ny fahamarinarana amen!


Andro ankalazan’ny fiangonana ny niakaran’i Jesosy any an-danitra no mahavory maro antiaka eto amin’ity maraina ity. Hoy izaho tany am-piandohana : mampalahelo fa vitsy dia vitsy ny olona, vitsy dia vitsy ny Kristianina izay mamoha fiangonana amin’ity fankalazana ny andro niakaran’i Jesosy ity, ari izy io matetika sy mananindray amin’ny andro alahady fa antanentam-potoana, ka maro ny olona no manao ny asa andavanandro, mankany an-tanimbary, mitady voalaha sy ny fahalalana ny amin’ny antoana, ary ny fehy makarana tsy fahahalalana ihany.

Ary ny Tompo niasa taminy ka nanamarina ny teny tamin’ny famantarana izay nomba azy. Amena.”

Ary Ray masina ò manamasina anay amin’ny fahamarinarana amen!


Andro ankalazan’ny fiangonana ny niakaran’i Jesosy any an-danitra no mahavory maro antiaka eto amin’ity maraina ity. Hoy izaho tany am-piandohana : mampalahelo fa vitsy dia vitsy ny olona, vitsy dia vitsy ny Kristianina izay mamoha fiangonana amin’ity fankalazana ny andro niakaran’i Jesosy ity, ari izy io matetika sy mananindray amin’ny andro alahady fa antanentam-potoana, ka maro ny olona no manao ny asa andavanandro, mankany an-tanimbary, mitady voalaha sy ny fahalalana ny amin’ny antoana, ary ny fehy makarana tsy fahahalalana ihany.

Ary Ray masina ò manamasina anay amin’ny fahamarinarana amen!


Voninahitra anie ho an’Andriamanitra ireny ihany izay hatramin’ny taloha indrindra ka ho mandrakizay amen.
2. Louibiens Fidinantenaainai Claudias (Translation)

The first word, brothers and sisters, on this Thursday morning, the day on which the church celebrates the ascension of Jesus into heaven, I am happy to greet all of us here in this church of Anosifasika. I greet us all because of God’s blessing which causes us to assemble here today. The day of the ascension of Jesus into heaven is a big day in the church, what is saddening however is that few churches celebrate it, perhaps because they don’t know what makes it an important matter, the reason that Jesus ascended into heaven for if they knew that then Christians would not cut off the praise of God on the Day of Ascension. Today is not a Sunday morning but Thursday I said there, but we all thank the Lord for we are gathered here to praise and give glory to Him and request from him too all that we seek whether bodily or mentally and especially spiritually. And so the Word of God which is our portion on this Day of Ascension Thursday morning today we will all together reveal here in the Gospel according to Mark, chapter 16, beginning at the 14th verse to the 20th verse.

When we have found it we should read it in the Name of Jesus our Lord: [Text is now read here.] O, Holy Father sanctify us in the truth, your word is truth. Amen.

Dearly assembled, the grace and peace that comes from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

The celebration of the day of the ascension of Jesus into heaven is what gathers the many of us here this morning. As I said in the beginning it is said that very few people, very few Christians open the church on this celebration of the day of the ascension of Jesus, and it is often not connected to a Sunday except occasionally, and so many are the folk who do their daily work, go to their rice fields, look for money, etc. and forget this Day of the Ascension of Jesus into heaven. There may be many reasons for this – there is the ignorance of what makes the ascension of Jesus into heaven a major thing and so they make light of this Day of Ascension. There too are those who think when it is not a Sunday then it is not very important and so they make it as nothing. Ignorance is the reason for this but we here this morning thank God every time we celebrate and praise God because of this day of the ascension of Jesus into heaven. It is not a new thing for us to celebrate and praise God on the day of Christmas when we celebrate the reason for the coming of Jesus as a human being here on the earth and even the small children celebrate it calling Christmas the festival of small children. When Easter comes then it is a truly big festival of the church, yes for even when Easter Monday comes it is a festival for the church for it is one that the entire parish praises and celebrates God. The Day of Pentecost also is a great day for the church as the day in which we receive those confrimands and catechumens as members of the church and to the reception of the Lord’s Supper, but before that, is the day of ascension which almost is made by many into nothing because of ignorance.

Here we are in learning what makes the day of the ascension of Jesus into heaven important. In the very first place, if we look at this text then Jesus shows himself to the eleven male disciples because Judas is not there any more but had already killed himself without repenting. But if he had repented, you know, he would have been forgiven. Eleven men are what is left and Jesus showed himself to them when they gathered together to eat.

We don’t really know much about the reason that they met together but we can consider the circumstances – about that Jesus who even though he died on the cross, even though he was buried

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1. *Ry havana* is better translated as “family” but doesn’t work well in English. I will make a consistent translation of “brothers and sisters.”

14 *Fitandremana* I translate as parish, literally, “that which is cared for [by the pastor]”. Generally pastors care for more than one congregation within their *fitandremana.*
then he rose from the dead and so conquered the very last enemy which is death. The men, they cogitated this indeed, they met still in the pounding of the heart, still unable to risk, still in fear of the Romans, “they dared to crucify Jesus, what about us?” There indeed Jesus appeared to them often. If we consider the text then we are in the forty days during which Jesus showed himself to those disciples after his resurrection from the dead. Here, however, is the last appearance of Jesus in the flesh to these eleven male disciples before he ascended into heaven. And here too, Jesus gives authority to the disciples sending them to go and preach and do many works in his name. And there is no other word, brothers and sisters, that lead the many missionaries to come from America and from Norway around the world, to traverse this whole world, sharing the Gospel with all people. It is not another word but this one in Mark 16 and the 15th verse where Jesus orders are give to these eleven male disciples, saying, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all people and those who believe and are baptized will be saved but those who are not willing to believe will be condemned.” That is the command of Jesus before his ascension into heaven, to the eleven men. This is what was the spring that pushed the apostles truly to go into the world and among those who have received that are us here in Madagascar. Believe in Jesus even with not seen with the eyes, and the Lord says, “Blessed are those who do not see and yet believe.”15 Brothers and sisters we are blessed way more than the apostles for even though we have not seen Jesus with our eyes we believe that he is alive there at the right side of God interceding for us everyday.

The words at the beginning of this text which is our portion here are words that should engage our minds, cause many to dispute really, this order given by Jesus to the eleven male apostles. It was not to all the disciples along with the women or all the many people who went along with Jesus who were given this order but the eleven men which is clear in the text. There will be a great discussion surely for many still receive this as forbidding women to become pastors, for example, if I don’t say [anything but] this, especially us here in Madagascar, here in the Malagasy Lutheran Church which still forbids even until now the ordaining of women. The reason, supposedly, is the order given by Jesus to teach, baptize which was given to the eleven men and at this there were no women present. Among the things we find for support in the Malagasy Lutheran Church for not ordaining women as pastors is this word even though these women have finished theological education and we still argue over it right up to today, even though these women who have finished their education in the Malagasy Lutheran Church demand to be ordained. We still do not accept it. It is not to solve this that I bring it up with this word, we do not yet truly know and we can not pronounce finally on this. What truly does Jesus want to say to these eleven men, and is it really discrimination against the women that saying that Jesus gave the order to these eleven men because the women were not there? We do not know the truth. This can be trusted if it is up to me. Jesus said to his disciples, “I still have many things to say to you but you cannot bear it yet right now but the time will come when I send my Spirit to you and he will teach you, and then you will know what I want to say.”16 That is to say, the Spirit has not yet come, the Holy Spirit has not come. There were many things that Jesus wished to announce to his disciples and it is said too that even if they were all that Jesus taught were written even this entire world would not be big enough to containe all the books written.17 This only is what I want to say, if it is the will of God, if it is truly the will of Jesus to accomplish this thing, this ordaining of women, then it will be accomplished as it has already been accomplished in many churches around the world. What we can trust is this, on the one hand the church has truly expanded around the world not because of the work of men alone but really because of that of women. But in my opinion alone, then it is clear that the service of women here in the

15 John 20:29
16 John 16:12
17 John 21:25
Malagasy Lutheran Church is not covered, hidden away, but rather if it were not for the women’s organization, what would the men do in this Malagasy Lutheran Church? Whether we like it or not, those women who are said to be nothing and their word cannot be believed still preach the Word of God, proclaim the Word of God, lead their friends, yes accomplish even more than the men even so that they even begin to shrink back, begin to make light of the speech of women that they don’t accomplish anything and don’t believe their word, - so that we cannot bear from a long time back what Jesus says, I have many things to say to you that you are not yet ready to bear today but that time will come when you will know the truth.” Dear brothers and sisters, this time in which we celebrate the ascension of Jesus into heaven is the time we will prepare ourselves for the awaiting of Pentecost when Jesus sent the Holy Spirit and caused the apostles to know all of Jesus’ will and the entire will of God. We await that. We will celebrate that shortly now and will return to that text.

Jesus gave authority to the apostles to preach, to proclaim the sermon, to proclaim the gospel to people without discrimination whether man or woman, Jew or Gentile, whatever, whether black skinned or white skinned, speaking the proclamation of the Word of God and no longer were the places to which they would go limited but into the entire world. Within this, too, was the commandment Jesus gave to the disciples to exorcise devils and it is a wonder that half the churches refuse the authority for this exorcism of devils. But for us in the Malagasy Lutheran Church, on the other hand, this is one of the strengths and what we call the work of the awakening, and if we have really awakened it is because it is said that the Malagasy Lutheran Church is the fastest growing in the world because of the work of the awakening, Sisters and Brothers.

Jesus ascended into heaven after he gave full authority to the apostles. What does this mean concerning the ascension of Jesus into heaven? First, the ascension of Jesus into heaven, brothers and sisters, announces the return to what makes him truly God, the return to that glory which he had shared with God the Father. At this time he is no longer the Jesus ruled over by human beings, no longer the Jesus derided by the Romans, spit on by the Romans – this Jesus in heaven and at the right side of God but Jesus sitting in his great glory. The mouths of human beings do not know how to tell and there is still no one free to recount the grandeur of the glory of Jesus even until today. But this is what I want to say, brothers and sisters, if you look at the Gospel of John chapter 14 to chapter 17 even, where Jesus prays for his disciples. That glory which Jesus has along with his Father he will not hold for himself alone but that he gives to me and gives to you also, he causes me to hope and causes you to hope too and it is already yours and already ours because now you are already a child of God in baptism, that place is already ours and the work that Jesus does there at the right side of God is to build a place for me and a place for you. Jesus already proclaimed that to the disciples when he encouraged them and said, “I must go, I must leave you but even still I will send you an Advocate, if I go to prepare a place for you and where I reside you also will reside, what my glory is will be your glory, too.” And if Jesus resides as Son of God in greatest glory, brothers and sisters, we all will share in that glory with him too.

Following that, the ascension of Jesus into heaven and his sitting at the right hand of God, this is its second meaning: God when he sent Jesus here on earth, Jesus when he was here on earth went about in a human manner, he went about visiting many places. He came from Jerusalem and went to Bethany then went on to Galilee. He crisscrossed Palestine all over, he wandered and he did work. The meaning of this is thus: When Jesus was in Galilee the people in Jerusalem did not see him. When Jesus was in Bethany and raised Lazarus from the dead those in Bethlehem and Galilee or any other place did not see him or what he did but those who saw him with their eyes and could shake

18 Galatians 3:28
19 John 14:2
his hand, touch him with their hands because Jesus still remained in what made him human even though God one hundred percent. On the other hand, Jesus ascended into heaven, this means thus: he is no longer for an individual alone, he is not God of Jerusalem alone, not God of Galilee alone, but God of the entire world and so wherever folk gather in his name there he is in the midst of them and this is a wondrous work of God. Now we preach the Word of God here in Anosikapoka and Jesus is around the world, too. Jesus is here in our midst and in your hearts individually but Jesus is still throughout the world because God already ascended to heaven remaining in what makes him God-Spirit fully, and to all those who call upon his name then he is there. This is a great profit to us, brothers and sisters, the ascension of Jesus into heaven that is, freedom for each to pray, to call upon his name and to receive an answer to prayer, for all to receive an answer to prayer together with that. And so we should not make light of this day of ascension.

Following this, when Jesus ascended into heaven then the word of God says here that he sat at the right side of God. What does this want to say: “Sit at the right side of God?” The right hand of God, brothers and sisters, is where that word will sit, Jehovah God it is that there is none like, the one whom no one beat, the one who conquered every emeny and conquered even unto his death, and so the “right hand of God” in the one sense, does not mean the hand at the side like this hand I have here but it speaks of the power of God which no one knows how to resist, it speaks to what makes God incomparable and there is none other but that Jesus who is at his right side, at the right hand of God. Isn’t that truly the condition we Christians live in today? Jesus is the right hand of God, working to crush the power of Satan, healing disease, freeing us from the problems each person has, each household because it is Jesus, the one who sits at the right hand of God, who is the full strength of God working and by this shows that there is no one like him. And let us not be mistaken but this is only Jesus. But you to whom Jesus gave authority too, me to whom Jesus gave authority too like his sending the disciples as seen in our portion here will preach, will exorcise devils, will trample serpents, etc., … authority already given by Jesus to the apostles, that is not for the apostles only but given to me and to each one of us, given all of us and if it is said that Jesus sits at the right hand of God and it is said that power of God unlike Jesus because Jesus is God’s right hand…you and I too are the strength of Jesus here on earth at the same time spreading the Word of God and working to crush the power of Satan. And so until today when the name of Jesus is pronounced, Satan who? The power of darkness, how? Will he not be defeated, no leave?

Beloved brothers and sisters, do not make light beginning now celebrating God on Ascension Day, for if Jesus had not ascended to heaven we would have suffered. For those who have money alone go in airplanes. Perhaps they would say, “Where did you go, Jesus?” Maybe he went to Paris. “Hey, let’s go to him there for there are sick to be healed. Where is Jesus now? Ah! Jesus is in America. Ah! Let’s go to America there to Jesus because there are those not well with us here, there is something to ask him for. If Jesus had not ascended, perhaps that is what would have happened but now on the other hand, Jesus has ascended to heaven so that he is not only for one person but whoever calls upon his name then he will come and answer prayer for the one who calls and pleads to him. And so don’t be like those who disbelieve any longer. Don’t be like those who make light and put down the Day of Ascension any longer and don’t be among those who do not dare beg like the apostles before the falling of the Holy Spirit for even if the Day of Pentecost where we celebrate the falling of the Holy Spirit even is already the remembrance remaining that we celebrate that to us God has already given his Spirit for all of us, for whatever we ask of God he give us, we receive. So don’t be among those who do not believe, don’t be among those who do not dare ask but ask whatever you wish to ask for from God for he will give you that because Jesus already has ascended into heaven

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20 Matthew 18:20
21 1 John 5:14
and sits at the right side of God too accomplishing that work which is that last work and work Jesus does eternally too there at the right side of God which is nothing else than interceding for me and for you every day, every day before God. If it happens that our sins are forgiven every day, brothers and sisters, it is because our unrighteousness is forgotten by God every day, it is because everything we ask of God is answered well and good and the reason is simple: there is Jesus also advocating for me and for you as he has ascended and sits at the right side of his Father. So Pastor Claudia says this? No. He already died to replace me in calamity. I was already dead in sin. I am already cleansed by his blood. That is mine and can not be had by the devil who really cannot accuse anymore and not me alone but all of us, each of us individually. If we have sin because of the weakness of what makes us human in the flesh then here: Jesus ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of his Father, interceded for me and for you to God every day, that is the advantage in the ascension of Jesus into heaven. We have an advocate, we have a spokesperson because Jesus ascended to heaven and the right hand of God. I am clean. My sin is forgiven. You are clean. We all are clean. All our sins are forgiven because the one who gave up his life and shed his blood indeed is our advocate before God. And so it is right and good that we should be joyous, praise and give glory to God because of this day of ascension and we will not forget to celebrate always that day of ascension by Jesus because it is a great profit to us all that day, brothers and sisters.

And finally, the ascension of Jesus into heaven is like my ascension and your ascension into heaven, too and so like the ascension of Jesus, it is possible to go along, says the word here, so like that is my ascension and your ascension, all of us will ascend who believe in him. He cleansed by his holy blood. Because Jesus ascended into heaven, then we all too shall ascend into heaven, even those who have already died and are buried, even if they have turned to dust, they will still be resurrected like the resurrection of Jesus and ascend into heaven like the ascending of Jesus into heaven and will sit with Jesus at the right hand of God. What then shall we trade to Jesus for this.22 There is nothing. Let us all for whom Jesus cleared the way, he wrestled with the horns before into heaven, so that we can flow in continuous stream traveling with him. And so even if the power of Satan calls and searches for us every day coming from the left and right, yes coming from the back to make us turn our way, then here it is: Jesus it is who goes before for me and for you. We all shall ascend into heaven to praise and celebrate God forever and ever, sitting with Jesus Christ because of this day.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forever. Amen.

22 I sense here a reference to the hymn 499: Inona re no hatakaloko... “What then shall I exchange…”
3. Georges


Amena.”

Ray masina o manamasina anay amin’ny fahamarinana fa ny teninao no fahamarinana. Amen.


Ray masina o manamasina anay amin’ny fahamarinana fa ny teninao no fahamarinana. Amen.

ataony asa atao amin’ny finoana, koa dia “izay mino ahy”, hoy Jesosy, “ny asa ataoko no ataony koa”.

Ary misy famantarana ho porofo fa miaraka amin’ny mpianatra Jesosy, dia ny famantarana izay anehoany ny fiarahany amin’ny mpianatra eto an-tany, na amin’ny fomba hita maso amin’ny maha Andriamanitra azy, dia ny famantarana amin’ny famoahana demonia izay anehoany fa ny fanjakan’Andriamanitra izay aoriny dia mandrava ny fanjakan’ny ratsy. Ko dia misy ny fandroahana, misy ny fanesorana ny fanjakan’ny satana. Izay ny baiko nomena ny mpianatra: avoahay ny demonia, atsangano ny maty, diovy ny boka, famantarana lehibe fa ny Tompo no mana ny asa, na dia ny mpianatra no miasa. Ko dia voa voaka ny asan’ny ratsy rehetra, miafa ny fanahy maloto ao anatin’ny olona, miafa ny fanahy osa ao am-pon’ny olona noho ilay Andriamanitra niasa ao amin’ny mpianatra, araka ny teny hoe, “indro aho momba anareo mandrakariva ambarapahatongan’ny fahataperan’izao tontolo izao”.

3. Georges (Translation)

Let us pray. We thank you Lord for your love, which has accomplished the work of salvation here on the earth, by which we have received life. You ascended into heaven at this time to show that you are God and to show us too, to point out the work for your kingdom will continue. Bless the word to be preached on this day of celebrating Ascension. Amen.

[Text is read]

Here [we are at], dear friends, the celebration of the Day of Ascension, Jesus ascended into heaven. What is the root of this ascension into heaven? The work for which he was sent here on earth was finished, that is the great work he did offering his life on the Cross to die in the place of the world’s sin and by which the world has received forgiveness and life in this precious exchange.

The will of the father is accomplished. Because the will of the father has been accomplished then the authority of heaven and earth was given him. When the forty days were full, Jesus … forty days in which he returned often showing himself to the disciples, forty days for preparing the disciples, forty days teaching the disciples because the disciples would succeed [him] in the work in the way that can be seen by the eyes, flesh here on earth but Jesus on the other hand would ascend into heaven, to show that he is God. Even though he is in heaven he is the Lord of all authority, as it is said, ‘in heaven and on earth.’ He will ascend to the Father in order to sit in the place that makes him God. This it is which frees him as it was said here for the church is people who go by faith. It is by faith that we go. The church in the work of the preaching of the gospel to be done because the resurrection from the dead is the base to be preached and proclaimed. It is this which is the tool as the word says, “When I am raised up to leave the earth then I will draw all people unto me.” And so a drawing of all people to approach Jesus is this lifting of him up to leave the earth and go to heaven, to everlasting life. And so his kingdom is preached to all people, his name is preached to all people and this causes all people to approach him and so we hope to be lifted up to heaven, too.

The ascension into heaven, that is the ascension of Jesus into heaven is the promise our our ascension there to eternal life in the place where he is, and the ascension into heaven is a promise for us that he will return from heaven, encouraging us to think about and to hope that he will come, return in glory to receive us too. The ascension to heaven is the encouragement of hus to believe in Jesus and that is what caused him to say to the disciples, because the disciples still didn’t believe, the disciples still hesitated even though it was said that he was raised from the dead and so in verse 14 counsel because of the disbelief of the disciples and counsel for the disciples to be living in the faith because the work they do is work in faith and so, “He who believes in me,” says Jesus, “the work I do he will do also and there are signs for proof that Jesus goes along with the disciples, that is signs by which he shows that he goes along with the disciples here on earth in a way which can be seen what makes him God. Signs as the exorcism of demons which show the kingdom of God which here after destroys the kingdom of evil and so there is exorcism, the removal of the kingdom of Satan.

And so this is the order given to the disciples: drive out demons, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, great signs that it is the Lord who does the work even if the disciples perform it and so all the work of evil is driven out, the dirty spirits in people leave, the spirits that cling in the hearts of people

23 Matthew 28:20
24 John 12:32
leave because of this God who works and with the disciples as said, “Behold I am with you to the close of the age.”

That resurrection and ascension we await, this causing of our hope in the return of the Lord in glory to come again. The road which Jesus took into the life of heaven, we also shall take and the way we go to approaching him first is repentance and believing in him and the ability to do the work of the Lord and so we are able to inherit salvation for eternal life.

And so have faith in Jesus for even though he is in heaven he is here with us too. This is what brought him to enliven the hope of the disciples that they would be clothed with power on the day of the descending of the Holy Spirit ten days after this. The day of Pentecost is the day on which the Spirit descended, on which the disciples were clothed with power in order to be sent into the work. The disciples would preach the gospel to the whole world.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forever. Amen.

25 Matthew 28:20
8. Dada Rajosoa


Ry Ray Masina ô, manamasina anay amin’ny fahamarinana fa ny teninao no fahamarinana, Amen.

Ry fiangonana malala, ho aminareo anie ny fahasoavan’i Jesosy Kristy sy ny fitiavan’ Andriamanitra Ray.


Izay mino anefa dia hovonjena fa ny tsy mety mino kosa dia ho avy ny andro sy ny fotonana izay hanamelohana azy. Efa nambara tamin’ity Alahady ity, tsy dia ela loatra izay ny hoe raha tonga ny Fanahy Masina dia hampihaikey an’izao tontolo izao ny fahotana, ny fahamarinarina sy ny firsarana; ka i Salomè dia nilaza hoe ny firtsarana satria ny handrezerina izao izay dia efa voatsara, voaheloka andrakizay dia ny devoly izany. Tsy misy fibebahana intsony ho an’ny devoly fa efa voasazay, efa voaheloka mandrakizay dia ny olona masina ny devoly izao ny amin’ny devoly ity. Ko a dia maniraka anareo Apositoly, ny mpanatra ao amin’ny Jesosy, izay no olona fa ny devoly anie efa voatsara! Ka izay olona tsy manaihy handroahana demony, tsy manaihy hialan’ny asan’andro ao aminy, hiara-meloka aminy mandrakizay.


teny tsy mamitaka, “toky tsy mamitaka” izao tenin’Andriamanitra izao. Tsy izaho no mamitaka anareo araka ny Marka io, fa dia hahazo famelankeloka tokoa ianareo.


Voninahitra anie ho an’Andriamanitra Ray sy Zanaka ary Fanahy Masina izay Azy hatramin’ny taloha indrindra ka ho mandrakizay, Amen.
8. Dada Rajasoa (Translation)

[Recording begins with citation of text, reading and greetings prescribed by the liturgy.]

“Go into the whole world and preach the gospel to all people. Those who believe and are baptized shall be saved but those who do not believe will be condemned.’ And Jesus, when he had spoken to them, was lifted up into heaven and seated at the right side of God.”

This is the Word the church receives from God to be heard on this Ascension Day. After Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to the disciples forty days after Easter then he ascended into heaven. Before his ascension into heaven then this word he left with the apostles: “Go into the whole world and preach the gospel to all people. Whoever believes and is baptized shall be saved but whoever does not believe will be condemned.” With that the Word of God announces that the salvation made by Jesus for all people was accomplished. There on the cross he said, “finished”. “Accomplished” is what he said. There in the Word of God in John chapter 1, John the Baptist says, “Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”

There he was, but he did not see [was not recognized?], crucified on the Cross where he removed the sins of the world, so that he might be carried to the Romans. He was offered for our offenses, and raised for our righteousness because salvation was seen there with the offering of him on the cross. And he was raised from the dead in order to show that his replacing of all human beings was accomplished and so he gave his righteousness to all who believe in him. This is what he says now, “Whosoever is baptized will be saved. But the one who does not believe,” does not receive the salvation that Jesus accomplished there, even though their salvation was accomplished there, “will be lost” because that one believes that Christ died in vain and did not substitute for him. And so all the people who accept and repent in front of him because his sin it was that was offered there on the cross, that one’s sin is forgiven.

Now we come on the great day saying, “Go into the world and preach the gospel to all people.” The gospel is Christ, dead because of our sin, raised for our righteousness. A separate statement of salvation because it liberates people from sin and death and the dominion of demons because of the death of the Lord Jesus, the opposer of our faults, and so then a statement that is already made to each person wherever they are, whether on the furthest island or in a distance place or in the hospital or in a large palace wherever there are sinners, all are told this gospel. You who are in the great palaces are free to pull up death and the dominion of demons by the roots because of faith. And so he carries the gospel to those who believe themselves already at peace. It is a poor peace like a leper milking. The leper milks, drinks milk but some goes to his mouth. The person

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26 Mark 16: 15,19
27 John 19:30
28 John 1:29
29 Romans 4:25
30 Mark 16:16a
31 Mark 16:15
32 Romans 4:25
33 Malagasy proverb: Miadan-dratsy ohatra ny boka mitery (Rajemisa, Rakibolana Malagasy, p. 653) or Miadan-dratsy hoatra ny boka mitery omby (Houlder, Ohabolana ou proverbes malgaches, p. 174). Both versions essentially translate as “In a poor peace like a leper milking (a cow).” Houlder takes this to mean that because the leper’s hands are slippery, nothing comes of the work. Rajemison notes that it means that although the person is in great distress, they have a sense of ease.
who is self-satisfied in the shining palace too is in a poor peace like the leper milking, like the rich man who was living with Lazarus. ³⁴ He ate much every day, he was attired in purple but a little after that he died and fell over the precipice into the place of the lost. Cut off he was then from eating a lot and he didn’t save his spirit but lost it. This world is ostentatious but it is fleeting, it doesn’t last. The days of this world must become insipid, they must become rot because they will be buried in the grave and are not free from sin, they are not free from death and so they are in a poor peace there. That is what makes so important the leading in speaking ³⁵ of this message, “Tell all the people that because of Jesus they are free.” “He who believes will be saved but the one who doesn’t believe then will come the day of his condemnation.”

It was already said last Sunday, it won’t be very long before the Holy Spirit will come and cause the world to accept sin, righteousness and judgment and so death. Judgment because the Andrarezina ³⁶ of this world has already been judged, eternally condemned – that is, the devil. Those who have no longer repented are for the devil for they are already penalized, already eternally condemned and so tell people so that they don’t go along with this devil. So you are sent, O apostles, O disciples ³⁷ of Jesus, tell the people that the Devil has already been judged! And so those people who do not accept the exorcism of their demons, that don’t accept to leave the demons possessing them, shall be condemned with them forever. This is an important thing that Jesus says here that the believers in Jesus will do his work too: “He who believes in me, the work I do he shall do also.”³³⁸ That is to say, the salvation accomplished by Jesus will be returned to each person at that time. That is preaching the gospel. And so before people preach the gospel, [before] the accomplishment of this great commandment is the bestowing by Jesus of the Holy Spirit according to the prayer which we said there at the altar, “Give us your Spirit that we the church might have true teachers that have no bounds.” ³⁹ And so the people who have the Holy Spirit are those sent to preach. The one who receives the Word and proclaims Jesus, I believe, but not his own opinion or his own mind is the one who knows how to believe in the Lord Christ or to proclaim him but the Holy Spirit calls him with the Gospel ⁴⁰ and explains with the gifts and sanctifies the faith in the Father in order to be a righteous person. And so the person who has the Holy Spirit is the preacher, able to proclaim Christ. This is what caused those preachers not to leave Jerusalem before they were clothed with strength from on high, that is the Holy Spirit. “You will yet hear the falling of the Holy Spirit upon you and you will be witnesses here in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria, even to the ends of the earth,” ⁴¹ said Jesus.

³⁴ Luke 16:17-31
³⁵ Translators note: “to lead in speaking” has the same connotation as to ‘lead in singing,’ that is, “to conduct”, as in a choir.
³⁶ Name of a tree considered the tallest in the forest which leads to a proverbial comment, Lavo ny andrarezina (the andrarezina is tall) meaning “one famous and high-positioned person is dead.” (Rajemison, p. 77).
³⁷ Here ‘apostles’ and ‘disciples’ refer to consecrated ‘sent ones’ and the community in the Soatanana Awakening movement and not to the biblical apostles and disciples.
³⁸ John 14:12
³⁹ From the collect for Ascension Day, however he is loosely quoting. The actual quote is, Iraho ho aty aminay ny Fanahinao Masina, ka omeo mpampianatra marina, izay mitana ny teninao ny fiangonana. “Send to us here you Holy Spirit and give us true teachers, that your church may lay hold of your word.” (Perikopa faiao amin’ny Fiangonana Loterana Malagasy, ⁴ᵗʰ Edition, 1985), 128.
⁴⁰ Loose quote of Luther’s explanation to the ³ᵗᵈ Article of the Creed in the Small Catechism.
And so we thank the Lord for this great message placed with the apostles. And they waited there and ten days after Jesus spoke this message the Holy Spirit came and so the kingdom of God, the Christian Church around the world, has come to us here too. And so we thank the Lord that because of the reliable preachers “that didn’t care for tiredness, that didn’t complain of blistering hands” but really gave effort at whatever price to be paid, whatever the type of suffering, believing this word of the Lord, “I am with you always to the close of the age.”

And so what was first preached? The first thing which was proclaimed was what made Jesus a prophet. Jesus Christ is a prophet. That is, he is that Word of God. He is that Life. As the Apostle said, “To whom shall we go, you have the words of eternal life.” He has already shown us life, we have seen it with our eyes, we have touched with our hands the life of Jesus Christ, for which you have been sent [as a messenger]. And so we will consider this Word of God, the gospel, the Bible which offers life to the people to whom we preach the Word. This is what the Word of God says, “Dear brothers, be well established, do not change, always accomplish a lot for the work of the Lord.”

When we see these many Christians, preachers praising God day and night who have already expended much money, expended their lives, their abilities, their days then it will be clear to them surely that “there is no loss at all in their great effort in the Lord.” Life has come to the church. It is believed to have an eternal place, said Jesus, when he advised the apostles because the Word of God says there: “He who believes in me, he who loves me will keep my word and my father will love him and we will come to him and dwell with him.”

And so what makes Jesus a prophet is important, carrying the Word of life into the world, placing it into the mouths of all preachers.

The second thing announced in this sermon is what makes Jesus the high priest. Jesus is not only a prophet but also the high priest. The high priest, we all know, is the one who carries, who offers sacrifice, prepares sacrifice, in the place of the sins of people, who prays before God. And for those high priests previously, sheep were what they offered, birds, incense to be burned. Shaded by the end of the life of Jesus Christ there on the cross, there are no worries. This is the true high priest who takes away the sins of the world – Jesus Christ. There is no other salvation, there is no other lesson under heaven by which people can achieve salvation but Jesus Christ alone. And so, as the word which he announced to us, there at the altar: “Believe in Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you and your family.” Your sin is forgiven in the name of Jesus. And again those who lay on hands, sent by Jesus to this work: these are the works that will follow those who believe, they will drive out demons in my name, they will speak in languages they don’t yet know, they will receive

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43 Matthew 28: 20.
44 John 6:68.
45 1 John 1:1
46 1 Corinthians 15:58a.
47 1 Corinthians 15:58b
48 John 14:23
49 Jeremiah 1:9; see also Luther’s Works WA 37, p. 381: “The mouth of every pastor is the mouth of Christ.”
50 Acts 4:12
51 Acts 16:31 as it is quoted in the absolution found in the Sunday morning liturgy of the Malagasy Lutheran Church (1970 revision).
snakes, they will heal the sick, they will do every good work because Jesus already has forgiven the sins of the people, and the sins forgiven by them are forgiven, and the devil leaves of his own because Jesus comes to the person. This is not a fanciful thing, the exorcism of demons is not something invented by human beings, the healing of the sick but God loves the whole person, the whole gospel. People are not just spirit but body and spirit. And so God wants the healing of the whole person, and so the entire gospel will be preach to the entire person and all people. What brings us to receive guests, and that welcome of guests purified by these little ones is nothing other than that Jesus loves the body, not only the spirit. And so we see in the Word of God it is not the spirit only that makes a person but the body, too. He is a living sacrifice and he is the reason God forgives the sins of those who repent, the sins of those who remember that they are wrong and it is he who will do the work of Jesus and Jesus is with him there at the right side of God the Father almighty and God will forgive the sins of those who repent.

Last of all, the words which announce the Word of God today, that lifted Jesus up, seated at the right hand of the God the Father Almighty, holy is his name, a place holy and high where he lives, giving life to the spirit of the humble and the Lord gives life to the flesh. When Jesus was ascended then he came to the Highest of the High, to the place that is high and central, there he sits, there no one can reach him. All his enemies are underneath the Lord. He cannot be caught any longer. He cannot be killed any longer but sits at the place high and central. And so says Psalm 110: “This is what the Lord said to the Lord: sit at my right hand until I put all your enemies under your feet.” His enemies are under his feet. This means that Jesus rules. He is king of kings and the truth of that word which says, “All authority in heaven and earth has been given me, all authority.” And so now with the ascension of Jesus into heaven it is evident what makes him king, the Lord of the whole world. For the day is coming when he will gather all the people and all the people will kneel before him, and the people who believe will be seen there, accepting their sin and their guilt forgiven and he will give them his glory and say to them, “Come you who were lead by evil, inherit the kingdom prepared for you.” And there are also those to whom he will say, “Away from me you doers of evil that would not believe and lived with that angel of this world.”

And so make effort, O church, don’t make life into a thing, O servants of God annointed to preach the Word of God there in the forgiveness of sins. For whoever believes that Jesus took his place – people judged guilty – then the day and time will come when he will be able to say: “Here I am and those children you gave me and those children who believed the gospel you preached to them.” Truly forgiven are the sins of these people. As the Psalm says, “The people will receive forgiveness,” for the word does not deceive, the promise does not deceive, this Word of God. “It is not I who deceives you,” according to Mark, but you will truly receive forgiveness.

52 Mark 16:17-18
53 This is a critique of the proverb, Fanahy no maha-olona. “Spirit is what makes a person.”
54 Psalm 110:1
55 Matthew 28:18
56 Matthew 25:34
57 Matthew 25:41
58 Isaiah 8:18; Hebrews 2:13.
59 Psalm 85:2
Following that, that which you need to make the kingdom of God progress will be given by God, “whatever you ask in my name,” says Jesus on this holy festival, “I will do that.” ⁶⁰ And so the word is true which is said here that the Lord “will work with them demonstrating the word by signs” ⁶¹, signs given by God to us to make his kingdom grow. It is faith that God needs from us for the work is Jesus’ and he is the one who offers, offers everything we need to accomplish it. We can touch this with our hands⁶² here in the Revival Center⁶³ in this town. For what we do we still do and we don’t know how it happens each September ¹⁷th. ⁶⁴ Jesus offers the true command about everything: “Behold, I am with you to the close of the age.” ⁶⁵ Jesus sits in the highest place and prospers his kingdom.

“Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be. Amen.” ⁶⁶

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⁶⁰ Matthew 21:22; Mark 11:24
⁶¹ Mark 16:20
⁶² John 20:24-28
⁶³ translates toby lehibe.
⁶⁴ Date of the annual meeting of the Soatanana Revival where thousands of guest come from around the island and the members of the local revival provide all the food and lodging.
⁶⁵ Matthew 28:20
⁶⁶ The Gloria Patri is prescribed in the Liturgy for the end of all sermons.
Aoka hivavaka isika rehetra: Ry Andriamanitra masina sy tsara indrindra ô, misaotra sy midera anao izahay, ary ny fanavotana efa nataonao taminay, ny fitsangananao tamin’ny maty, ny fiakaranao any amin’ny voninahitrao dia samy toky nomenao anay, nomenao ny mpianatra fahizay, nomenao ny fiangonana mandraka androany. Koa misaotra sy midera anao izahay fa izany lalana nodiavin’ny Zanakao lahitokana izany dia nataonao indrindra hampahery anay amin’izao fiaimanana izao satria olona ho faty koa izahay, olona hody; kanefa tsy hody fe hody ka ho levin’ny tany manandrakizay, fa amin’ny alalan’ny Zanakao dia atsanganao handova ny fiaimanana mandrakizay izay ombain’ny fahasambarana lavitry ny sento sy tomany. Misaotra anao izahay satria efa maro tokoa ny fitahiana nataonao taminay na dia amin’izao tany sarotra izao azy, ary izany fitahianao izany dia anehoaao aminay famantarana fa momba anay ianao, miaraka aminay mandrakariva ianao. Koa mandra-pihaviny’i Jesosy eny amin’ny rahon’ny lanitra dia tehirizo ho feno ao anatinay izany finoana izany, ary amin’ny Anarany koa no hangaryanahay sy hanirianay izany rehetra izany. Amen.


Ry Ray Masina ô manamasina anay amin’ny fahamarinina fa ny teninanao no fahamarinana.


Nolazaina tamintsika tamin’ny Paska izany. Tsy voatery ho izany anefa Jesosy, izany hoe tsy voatery ho amin’izany toerana na voafaritry ny saina ho amin’ ilay nahitana azy ihany Jesosy. Raha jerena ny


Rehefa vita batisa isika dia tsy maintsy mitoetra ao amin’ny finoana. Tsy majika ny zavatra natao amintsisika fa ny finoana nomena tamin’izany batisa izany sy ny zavatra entina ao aminy, nentin’Andriamanitra ao aminy, izany no tsy hanamolohana antisika koa. Inona moa no mariky ny tsy finoana ho antsika izay vita batisa? Ny anandrakia, ny fisalasalana amin’ny fanompoana an’Andriamanitra izay toriana ato amin’ny fiongonana ka manao zavatra roa. Ny faharoa, ny fahalainana ka heverina hoe vitavita ho azy ny fofandrasaina amin’Andriamanitra sy ny fiainanana

33


Betsaka ihany dia tanyta mikasika an’izy io, dia hita amintsika Malagasy izay malaza amin’ny-.-, inona moa ny filaza azy?-"famorihana". Malaza amin’ny famorihana manko isika Malagasy ary izay no mbola aloka mandindona sy manindy ny toe-tsaina maka-Malagasy maro koa mahatonga azy hanompo sampy aza. Efa nisy pasitora natao izany tsy maty, efa nisy mpiandry natao izany tsy maty. ary ny hahalalana fa nisy izy dia ilay olona no niverina indray mifona mangataka famelankeloka fa nataony ilay zavatra, efa ilay olona nihinina tsy nahalala, tsy nahalala ka ao ny miaiky manao hoe miaiky anao aho, ao ny manao hoe mifona aminao aho. Ka na dia “hisotro zava-mahafaty azy dia tsy hampaninonina azy izany”. Famatarana omena ny mino.

isika hoe: ka izany ve Jesosy tsy manohitra ny teny hoe “tsy miova omaly anio ar y mandrakizay’?.
Ny fomba fisehoan’i Jesosy dia miova, fa izy tsy miovah, tsy miova ny fitiavany, tsy miova ny famonjeny, tsy miova ny fampitany hafatra fa dia mijanona manadraariva amin’ny teniny izy, fa anechoany amin’ny olombelona rehetra fa ny olombelona rehetra eran’izao tontolo izao no vonjeny. 
Dia mety hiseho amin’ny endrika Alemanina izy, Malagasy izy, Afrikana izy sy ny maro samihafa, izay Jesosy. Amin’ny episitilin’ny Petera na Hebroo dia voalaza fa “mazotoa maha vahiny fa efa maro tamin’ireny no nampian-trano Anjely izay tsy fantasany akory”.


Manaraka an’izay, rehefa mandeha dia ny marina ihany koa hoe entina, ilay fanazavana ehy amin’ny voalohany. Arakaraka ny hitoriana ity filazantsara ity koa anie re olona no manamafy ny finoana e! “Tahaka ny mitsongo anamamy ka arakaraka ny angalanana ny raviny no hiroboany”. Izay
10. Rakotonomenjanahary Danielson (Translation)

Let us pray. O, holy and infinitely good God, we thank and praise you and the redemption you have already made for us, your resurrection from the dead, your ascension into heaven...are all promises you have given us, that you have given your disciples from the past, you have given your church up until today and so we thank and praise you for that is the way your only Son cleared and so you made it to strengthen us indeed in this life because we are people who will die, people who will go home but not going home limited by going home and so forever buried in the ground but because of your Son resurrected when eternal life comes in order to be blessedness far from mourning and crying. We thank you that the blessings you have made for us are already many in order to show us the signs that you are with us, go with us always. And so until Jesus comes again on the clouds of heaven hold that life fully inside us and so in His name we ask and wish this. Amen.

If we look at the Gospel of Mark just before this text which is our portion today then the disciples did not recognize Jesus when he appeared to them. There might be two reasons for this. The one is that they may not have believed in the resurrection from the dead at all and so they didn’t believe that Jesus was this one. This really is something that can get people if there is something that falls into their thoughts deeply and so that thing shows. For example, one person we all heard compare that shipwrecked boat in Mahajanga, <<Samson>>68, many where dead there. And so if among those who were thought to be dead now there was one who appeared to his family, his friends wouldn’t believe it, because it has already been several days. That is the one. The second might be in a different manner where Jesus shows himself and that is what is said here just before this text when he went with the two men in the field, says Mark, then a he showed himself in a different form, that is not the normal appearance of Jesus to which was normal when he was still living and so they didn’t know him. This is underlined in other writings in Holy Scripture where theose two wen to Emmaus who traveled with Jesus when he rose on Sunday and then they spoke on the road but they didn’t know him. These are the two reason that they might not have known Jesus, however it is the second reason where Holy Scripture seems to say that the recognition of Jesus changed to another appearance. The appearance of him at different times, other times I say because when he appeared to the disciples then he came and was recognized there in the house spoken about on Easter. Jesus isn’t required to be like that, that is to say, Jesus is not required to be in that place or limited by the mind to that appearance alone. If we look at the Gospel of Mark, when he appeared to the eleven disciples because Judas wasn’t there anymore but had already killed himself, then...the disciples still were panting there eating, they were panting as a result of what had already fallen into their minds that is truly buried, lowered into the grave with hard masonry and it was hard to believe. Because of this Jesus gave them blame, he blamed them. The giving of blame acquires many aspects in the story we’re following. The first that he already spoke before his crucifixion and before his death that he would rise on the third day. That was ruined when the events, ruined not remaining. When the women like Mary Magdalene spoke that the Lord is risen it was like a dream to some, and some believed anyway. And Thomas it was who was singled out among those who truly did not believe when Jesus showed himself to the

67 Mark 16:9-13 is what he seems to be citing however it was not those to whom Jesus appeared who did not recognize him, it was the disciples who did not receive the reports. Otherwise he may be conflating this with other gospels.

68 A recent event at the time of the sermon.
Faith hesitates according to the way things are, saying, “Who is this really or how is this really happening?” The standing of the question really is who really is this? It is this question which is answered in order to strengthen the base of the thoughts and to have hesitation leave so that Jesus speaks. Jesus speaks sending the disciples, “Go into the world and preach the gospel to all people.” This is Jesus’ command, “Preach the gospel to all people.” This strengthens the faith of the disciples because if commanded to preach the life-giving gospel that has already been announced and repeated many times it is because it reinforces that he is truly very good and so he gives the command for the disciples to go out to all people. Here is something that is a little upsetting in the mood of the day if Jesus said to go to all people. That is, there is no discrimination of the type of people according to nationality and social position and also according to age. There is no discrimination even if it is a child in the womb then they can receive the message. Here is the thing that has already been said by many and we have understood to be researched by those doctors: if the mother carrying the child in her womb is often singing the child will want to sing. If the mother is violent while carrying him then the child will be violent. The meaning of this is as follows: people can receive a message even while still in the womb and if sung to from the hymnal during the time it is carried in the womb then there is already a message that has been delivered to the child in the womb already. That is what covers in a broad-brush what is said as “all the people” from what we think and the furthest our minds can reach that is from where are people – even people in the womb – from there has the gospel even been able to enter. It is not the laying ahold of this by this means only but that which is heard also has made it over to the child in the womb. So when he/she arrives here on earth he/she is already born, the things that a child learns are very many which are still being researched which we parents haven’t even thought of, which we adults believe that a child cannot learn because they still cannot speak, they cannot display their thoughts in an adult manner and so there is their communication which is already accomplished by God in creation there. That is what brings us to the consideration in baptism, that is, form the child here in coming to church and form the child in prayer for that is the thing for which they are suited, and if that makes him/her Christian then follow. So with this the reading is justified which says the child is not capable of believing, there is no understanding of belief and disbelief in children but as that which has been said then: the child is given faith by God, the child is given faith by God if all people are preached the gospel to. It is not possible to shove aside children either the child who still knows nothing of worship for there is something which gets through to them for sometime in the future it will show clearly. Then the believing and baptizing are arranged together, the word is spoken, believe first then be baptized as I have said it, you cannot distinguish the child who does not believe because of this. So the baptism will be prevented but they don’t return the next time and the one who is not willing to believe will be condemned.

When we are baptised then we must rest in the faith. It is not magic which is done to us but faith which is given to us at that time and what is carried with it, carried by God with it and that is what would condemn us. What then are the marks of disbelief for those of us baptized? One is hesitation in serving God who is preached here in church. The second is laziness and thinking that the relationship with God is something done of itself and daily life even if you don’t go to church. This is the disease which gnaws at faith and would like to lead to disbelief. Because of this the faith which is made by God like the raising from the dead; Jesus whom we see here, the belief in him, this is what does not condemn, the faith in the work of salvation by means of the preaching of the gospel and baptism, these too are not reasons for condemnation. Even that however Jesus does not stop there

69 John 20:24-29

70 Malagasy has only one 3rd person singular pronoun which is gender neutral. Unless the speaker makes a specific choice and demonstrates it by clarifying words, the listener is unable to determine gender.
but there are signs he says will follow the believer. This is the word we hear everytime we have an awakening service here, “he will drive out demons in my name, he will speak in languages he yet does not know, he will handle snakes, and even if he drinks something with poison it will not mean a thing; he will place hands on the sick and they will be healed. Signs for the believers.

So we are here in the church where there are what we call shepherds, (there are those who are not shepherds) and so the shepherds have a ministerial role which is true. And this word one among others that that causes us not to get along with the new churches and ourselves because they say that if we don’t do [these signs] then we don’t believe, if we don’t do these signs, we don’t believe. This is not it, however. For whoever believes then these signs follow him/her and if these signs follow then it is not because God commanded them to be but for the display of the glory of God in the work of preaching the gospel. The command there must be so when for example there is a laying on of hands and the person is not healed at that time then that is used to say that this person does not have authority from God – for example. But here is the way Jesus put the idea: all Christians believe who the resurrection of Jesus and well established in this can exorcise devils, even those not able to exorcise devils exorcise devils, don’t wait for a shepherd for a shepherd alone can exorcise devils but a single Christian can exorcise a devil. Don’t wait for a shepherd before a person can speak in unknown tongues but he will speak in the unknown language if that is how the Spirit leads him: a sign for those who believe. What does not make this the same is this: the devil already knows how to make people and the church speak in an unknown language, and so it has already been seen, already experienced that is the devil causing the unknown speech. This is why I say that this not something that is a measuring edge for what has to take place. Three things I have seen with my own eyes but I’ll tell you one. We were worshipping one day, a while back, more than twenty years ago, and were speaking in unknown languages there, because it was not stopped but came on its own. And at that time there happened to be a Norwegian there and when he was there Norwegian is what was spoken, spoken by this person. When the service was over this is what the leader said: all dirty words is what he said, the [leader] told but Norwegian just the same, dirty words! And so the desire to prattle foolishly without meaning is not for the reason of showing that I believe or anything like that. I do not know what is in the person so it is just a trap, and so glossalalia can be limited. Whether this or not here in the training in the four churches where we don’t make light of the mind, this glossalalia might be known by means of study so perhaps it is a Malagasy who speaks Norwegian like we saw there, perhaps it is an American preaching in Malagasy, African or Russian, that is one that our country does not know but it is given, the Spirit working by way of the mind too. And so the person who believes can speak or preach in the languages of many different countries. This cannot be left out and cannot be made light of but an instrument of God used to get his message across. Because of this it is not that this bleating of sheep of which no one knows anything that can be said to be the speaking of unknown languages for even us right now if able to speak many other languages, if I speak in German now, many would not know it, they don’t know that it is German but a German would know it. Many national languages, the way Luke says it, and so they fill what is lacking in the other. Whether this is it or not however there are there is the joining together of many words within the glossalalia. And so occasionally in one prayer there might be not less than ten languages mixed up together. And that is an unknown language, too. A sign given the disciples, that is what Jesus said. These two are both a reinforcement of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

And here too is the drinking of a poison which won’t have any effect. Perhaps not here among us but the district which I tell about in this story. This is not a piece of theatre or a demonstration but a thing which must proceed, that must be done where there is no choice and so drink something that is deadly. Here is the example that I said: not very long ago but I somewhat forget the place, where it really was, in Mandakibo I say there was a shepherd at that time cooking rice porridge at noon, which is the way we do it where I’m from in the western region – rice porridge at noon. When the rice porridge was served there was something like money, two ariary at that time, then his shepherd friend said, “Don’t eat that today for there is poison!” “No! Even if I eat something
that is poisonous it won’t do anything to me.” And so he ate. He died. He died. That is what I meant by a piece of theater or a demonstration. Supposedly once at Ambohitsirohitra there was one day a Christian [literally, a pray-er] who was arrested by the government and brought there and made to drink poison. (I apologize but not during the persecution. I don’t know when but supposedly and so it may be true, it might not but I tell the story that we might think about it.) That person having just taken the glass then suddenly the glass broke in his hand. He didn’t drink it. That may be how these things appear. What I would like to give now is that during the time of the preaching of the gospel in many places and every nation, he will not leave one unloved, an enemy of God, The one who carries the gospel is an enemy of the devil and perhaps will drink something deadly but he won’t know it and it won’t affect him. That is what this word means and this advises two sides of things: first, don’t be daring in an empty way to eat deadly things for it makes it seem as if God seemingly doesn’t save. Also not be afraid of the things that might happen to you who carry the gospel for whatever is near you ther, whatever happens to you, Jesus will protect you. There are a lot of stories touching on this which are seen here among us Malagasy. What is the way it said, “meetings”. We are famous for our meetings, we Malagasy and there is still darkness round about and piques the conscience of what makes many of us Malagasy and brings people to worship idols even. There was already a pastor who did this and didn’t die, there was already a shepherd who did this and didn’t die and how we know this is because there was that one person who returned once and repented, begging forgiveness for he had done this thing. That is how we know that the person ate without knowing, without knowing. And so there is the accepting, that is, “I accept you.” There is what is called “I apologize to you.” And so even if he drank poison it didn’t affect him. A sign given to those who believe. Dear friends, to this point it is to announce to us and to strengthen us that Jesus is alive and travels with us.

Not a dead Jesus but a living Jesus and the appearance is not how he was known like once when he still went with his disciples before his death and so one alone was the way that Jesus appeared but even to us every day though we do not see him with our eyes and perhaps we are unaware of it even if he were to show his body. There was a man seen by the side of the road in disarray crying – and here is what makes the difference – the gift of grace is that when he passed by he knew that was Jesus. And you, what about you here? Why is it that you cry like this? Why are you here? What are you doing here? This was his response: “I am very sad,” he said, “because the church will not repent and so it is poor even until now.” It’s just a story and the thing is told among us what was heard which is to say that we, too, would not recognize Jesus if Jesus appeared to us. In what makes us like that perhaps we wouldn’t know. It wouldn’t be in that form that shines which we might be waiting for or hope nor in that long white clothing that we see in the pictures here and there. Perhaps that is not how Jesus would appear. And even if he spoke with you you might not know him. That is what Jesus is in our day, in these days now because of Jesus showing himself in many different guises and that shows as well that he doesn’t hold on to what makes him a Jew only. Jesus when he really accomplished salvation. And so it is a mistake to say that he is a Jew only. And it is a mistake to say that he is only a man. Because in this manner of Jesus now, he being alive now he might show himself as a woman even, were he to need to. And so we say, “Hey, doesn’t that oppose the word that says, he doesn’t change yesterday, today and forever?” The way in which Jesus shows himself changes but he doesn’t change; his love doesn’t change; his salvation doesn’t change; his delivering the message doesn’t change. He remains forever in his word but shows himself to all people, all people in this world it is whom he saves. So he might show up as a German, as a Malagasy as an African and many others. That’s Jesus.

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71 Hebrews 13:8
It says in the Epistle of Peter or Hebrews, “Be eager to receive guests for already many have brought angels into their homes without knowing it at all.” Dear friends, in this form of Jesus’ appearance now there is nothing frightening but only comforting. A giver of strength to speak the love of God the Father, revealer to us that we he will not abandon as this life passes. And he when he spoke, spoke, if we follow what is written then, there he ascended into heaven. He ascended into heaven at that time and the film makers have shown their idea of how that might have looked, but what we know is this, that the disciples really saw him ascend into heaven. And in the Gospel of Mark it says he sat at God’s right hand. There really isn’t yet anyone who knows well or can consider what it is like, that is where truly is heaven but he left this earth. If we are just leavin the earth then we must ascend if we, for example, wish to be seen, alive. But if we leave this earth and descend there below then often that is death. And so he left the earth and that force which holds our feet had no power over him and so he went to sit at the right side of God. That is what is written in the gospel of Mark.

What is it that says that Jesus is with us even until today? It is that until today Jesus is at the right hand of God eternally. And if he is at the right side of God then we know that the person at the right side of God is trustworthy and Holy Scripture shows that this Jesus is the one trusted by God the most. It is said often, at the baptism and in other writings. And so when he ascended into heaven he intercedes for us. Where is Jesus now? He is both there at God’s right side and here with us. That is how it is with Jesus. There is a saying among us Malagasy that makes us think, “Not everything that shines is star; not everything the heart needs is marked out; it is not the talkative one who has the truth; it is not the one living alone who leaves and it is not the craziness of the chicken to sit south of the cooking fire but because it is the place assigned to it; so I won’t argue fate because it is aranged above.” Jesus, dear friends, according to what I said there, has been lifted on high, lifted on high and it is the result of humility that God lifted him up. Paul has written this too and it still is repeated to us for it is not everything that appears or is showy and seems good to the eye and in living, it is not that at all that can be said to be good, not everything that is central and has a place on high, not that at all which is reached by heaven but with God those who are humble reveal glory.

This is the message for us from this story which the gospel of Mark reminds us. First, It is still our portion even today to go and preach the gospel to all people. And so don’t get angry or vexed if it is, for example, not us seen there in the market or there in boulevard but another church for our portion is to preach the gospel to all people. Now here: Our portion, we Lutherans, is to preach there where there has not been preaching, there we will proclaim but not in the lands which have already heard – that is a small difference. We don’t go and preach in the Saturday Market because the whole area of Antsirabe, it is believed, has already heard the gospel. But we will go to the area of Bemaro, for example or to the area in the upper south, for example, where there are some who have no knowledge at all of the gospel. That is the program of the Lutheran Church. It will cause us some grief. Go, he says.

Following this when we go then the truth alone will be carried, that explanation there in the beginning. According to the preaching of this gospel also may the faith of people be strengthened! Like picking spinach, as the leaves are taken, it will grow larger. That too is faith but faith without works is dead, says James. And so if the church is a bit sick, it doesn’t accomplish much. There are

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72 Hebrews 13:2
73 Mark 1:11; Matthew 3:17; Luke 3:22; 2 Peter 1:17-18;
74 The very large market that meets in Antsirabe – one of the largest markets on the island.
75 Anamamy is a green leafy vegetable much like spinach.
76 James 2:26
many different problems because of the lack of preaching seen firstly, firstly to us who consider it: the lack of going to preach. And so all the baptised go together to do that for according to the preaching that makes faith powerful and if not preached then their faith is not powerful. Preach the gospel to all people – not just the shepherds or just the evangelist who are sent but all the Christians here in this world. We all know this story well for there in Norway more than a thousand years ago was the gospel first carried but for us it is not yet 150 years. But when there the family, there was born at that point the “go extend the gospel and so they came here – the English, the Norwegians and also the French carring the gospel. [Recording ends here as the tape ran out.]
14. Rakotoniaina Jean de Dieu


Ray Masina ô, manamasina anay amin’ny fahamarinana fa ny teninao no fahamarinana. Amen.


Raha jertenisika ny filazantsaran’i Marka 16 izay hamaranany ny filazantsarany dia mizara roa lehibe izany: ny andininy valo voalohany no hanatrehantsika ny fanambarana ny zava-miseho tamin’ny andro voalohany tamin’ny herinandro manaraka ny nanomboana an’i Jesosy sy nandevenana azy izany. Rentsika tamin’ny Paska izany fa foana ny fasana, ny Anjely no nanambarna fa ntsangana tamin’ny maty ny Tompo ary vavolombe kizany tanta ara izany ireo hevihavy izay nandeha tany amin’ny fasana vao maraina alina. Ny tapany faharaoa amin’izany filazantsara izany ao amin’io toko faha 16 io dia misy andininy 12 izay nanontenana ny zava-miseho na zava-nitranga efapolo andro tany aorian’izany fasana foana izany ka nanambana ao amin’ny tapany faharaoa izany amin’ny niakaran’i Jesosy any an-danitra. Azy ao amin’ny andininy farany dia nilaza ny tohin’ny fiainan’ny fiangonana na ny mpianatra aorian’izay nitsangana an’i Jesosy tamin’ny maty izany; dia voalaza fa nandeha nitori-teny ireo mpianatra ireo ary voalaza fa niara-iasi tamin’ireo mpianatra ireo Jesosy ka ny tori-teny izay natao ’izy ireo no nohamarininy tamin’ny famantaran’ana izay nampomamb'an’i Jesosy azy. Be dia be ny mpandinika na mpandalina ny soratra masina no milaza fa raha ny tena amin’ny filazantsara fototra amin’ity Marka ity dia mijanona eo amin’ny andininy faha 8. Eo no tena soratra tena natao’i Marka fa ny fiangonana no nanampy manomboka amin’ny andininy faha 9 ka hatramin’ny faha 20. Fa mihantona fotsiny, hoy izy ireo, ny amin’izany tantaran’ny Paska izany koa dia ampindiriny ao izao tantara hananantsika anjara amin’ity andro nikarana ity.

Ny zava-dehibe banjinina ao amin’izany Marka toko faha 16 izany moa dia ny amin’ny fitsanganan’i Jesosy tamin’ny maty, fitsanganany tamin’ny maty izay tsy azy porofoina na amin’ny inona na amin’ny inona afa-tsy amin’ny finoana ihany. Tsy azy porofoina na ara-pitaoavana izany na araka ny kajy samihafa izany na araka ny fahendrena samihafa izany, tsy azy porofoina amin’izany fa ny finoana ihany no hany porofo velonana manambaraka na tena nitsangana tamin’ny maty Tompo. Ny Apositoly dia nananoratra fa “raha manaikey amin’ny vava ianao fa Andriamanitra efa nanangana an’i Jesosy tamin’ny maty ary raha mino amin’ny fo tokoa dia hovonjena ianao”. Zava-dehibe ny finoana ny amin’ny resaka hoe fitsanganana amin’ny maty. Ny finoana no akafa maneho fa ntsangana tamin’ny maty ny Tompo. Tsy zavatra azon’ny olona porofoina amin’izany ataony sy ny fahalalany ny fitsanganana kanefa koa tsy azon’ny olona lavina milihitsy izany fahamarinana sy ny fisian’izany. Ka dia tsy azy asehon’ny fahalalan’izany izany no tsy azy lavina amin’ny fahalalana kanefa tsy maintsy ekena. Ny fisehoan’i Jesosy taorian’izany fitsanganana izany, izay voalaza eto, dia tena tantara tsy azon’ny olona lavina fa tantara marina sy azy isalasalana. Ny fandavan’ny olona izany tantara izany.
dia fandavana izay rehetra niseho tamin’ny fiainain’i Jesosy, ny nisehoany tamin’ny mpianatra ka tsy azony esorina ao anatin’izany tantara-piaina izany.


Eto amin’izao teny omena ny fiangonana izao aza dia zavatra roa lehibe no azo sintonina ao: voalahany dia baiko avy amin’i Jesosy ny hoe “mandehana”, mandehana any amin’izao tontolo izao ianarcre. Io no anehoana fa Jesosy ilay nitsangana tamin’ny maty ka velona mandrakizay, inoan’ny fiangonana sy eken’ny fiangonana dia mahatonga fahavelomanana ao amin’ny fiangonana ka dia velona ny fiangonana; porofo amin’ny fahaveloman’ny fiangonana ny fandehanana mitory ny filazantsara amin’izao tontolo izao. Tsy azon’ny fiangonana lavina izany baiko izany raha mbola fiangonana Kristianina koa ny fiangonana, ary izany fandehanana izany dia heacho amin’ny endrika maro simihafa: ao ny tena mandeha ara-bakiteny, ao izay tsy afaka mandeha ka maniraka iraka amin’ny alalan’ny fahalalana asa ny amin’ny finoana indrindra ny amin’ny fiangonana, ary izany fahavelomana ny zavatra rehetra ny fahalalana, ny fahandrena no entina amin’ny fitsanganana amin’izao tontola izao fa ilay fandehanana amin’izao Jesosy Kristy izay mifototra indrindra amin’izany fitsanganana tamin’ny maty izany. Ka na inona na inona fanambarana atao iavelan’ny fitsanganan’i Jesosy tamin’ny maty izany. Io no sary ao


45
mbola atoandro dia mandehana. Ny Tompo anefà izay maniraka mampandeha ny fiangonana dia voalaza tsara eto fa manana ny andraikiny koa izy. Tsy hoe maniraka fotsiny ihany fa milaza izy eto fa hametraka ny fahefana ao amin’izay hirahiny; momba izay hirahiny izy mba handresen’ny iraka sy ny fahefana rehetra izay tsy misy eto amin’izao tontolo izao ka misakana azy tsy hahatanteraka izany asa fanirahana izany; ka dia mandresy izy. Tsy vitan’izany ihany fa apetranà sy omeny izay hirahiny ihany koa ny hery sy ny fahefana rehetra hahavitanà izany zavatra tsy vitan’ny nofo amin’ny maha-olombelona, ka dia hainy, ary io no nolazain’i Jesosy hoe: hain’ny mino ny zavatra rehetra dia dia mahay manao izany isika fiangonana.

Ary ny farany, hery lehibe izay tokony ao amin’ny fiangonana, eo anatrehan’ny aza izay atao amin’ny maha-fiangonana azy dia ny fahalalany sy ny fahafantarany fa tsy misaraka aminy ny Tompo fa “momba azy mandrakariva ambara-pahataperan’izao tontolo izao”. Ary tahaka an’i Jesosy izay efa niakatra velona any an-danitra dia tsy maintsy hanaraka azy koa ny fiangonana rehefa vita izany asa hanirahan’ny Tompo azy izany. Koa mahereza tomkoko, tanteraho avokoa ny adidy izay efa napetra ny Tompo amintsika fiangonana mba handresantsika ilay teny fahasoavana “efa natokytamin’ny kely indrindra ka dia Hotendrena ho mpanapaka lehibe. Midira amin’ny fifalian’ny Tomponao”.

Dia ho an’Anriamanitra irery anie ny voninahitra izay efa azy hatramin’ny taloha indrindra ka ho mandrakizay!

If we look at the Gospel of Mark chapter 16 which ends the gospel, it divides into two big sections: the first eight verses which brings us to the announcement of what happened on the first day of the week after the crucifixion of Jesus and his burial. We heard this on Easter that the tomb was empty. It was the angel which proclaimed that the Lord was risen from the dead and those women who went to the tomb early in the morning while it was still dark were the witness of this story. The second part of this gospel here in chapter 16 there are 12 verses which tell the story of what happened forty days after the empty tomb and so this announces in the second half that concerning the ascension of Jesus into heaven. And there is the last verse that speaks to the life of the church or the disciples after the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. It says that these disciples went and preached and it is said that Jesus worked with these disciples and so it was the sermons which they made which Jesus verified with signs which Jesus caused to have covered them. There are many commentators and researchers of Holy Scripture who say that if we consider the base of this gospel of Mark then it stops here at the 8th verse. To there is that which Mark truly wrote but the church added beginning at verse 9 to verse 20 for they say that the story of Easter just hangs there and so the story which we have of ascension is just added.

The important thing carefully looked at in this chapter 16 of Mark is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. His resurrection from the dead which cannot be proved by anything but faith alone, which cannot be proved either by tools or other measurements nor by other wisdom; which cannot be proved but for which faith alone is the sole living proof which announces that the Lord is truly raised from the dead. The Apostle wrote that if you accept with the mouth that God raised Jesus from the dead and believe with the heart then you will be saved. The conversation about the resurrection from the dead is important for the faith. It is faith which can show that the Lord is risen from the dead. It is not something that people can prove by what they do and with their understanding. The resurrection, however, also cannot be dismissed at all by people, its truth and existence. It is because it is not demonstrable by understanding that it cannot be erased by understanding but must be accepted. The appearance of Jesus after that resurrection that is spoken of here is a story that people cannot erase for it is a true story that cannot be doubted, the rejection of this story by people is a rejection of what appeared during the life of Jesus, his appearance to the disciples and it cannot be removed from that story of life.

Here in the word of God which is our portion the church is spoken to directly, the church which is called upon to preach, called upon to announce the story of the resurrection. That business of the church is the preaching of the gospel. This is the final proof for the world that Jesus is truly raised from the dead. There is no other way or manner or move that can be done except that preaching of the gospel. And so what the church does in accomplishing this command from the Lord is nothing other than proving to the world that Jesus is truly risen from the dead and that resurrection from the dead is truly central in the business of all Christians or the business of God here in this world. This resurrection is the base of all the proclamation whether during the time of the apostles or the first church, that is, or the church today, this is its one thought. That it is resurrection upon which all the teachings rest or all the teaching from the days of the apostles. And so if the resurrection is erased, if the resurrection causes hesitation, if the resurrection is not accepted then everything the...
Apostle proclaimed is nullified as well,\textsuperscript{79} for faith is nullified as well. Indeed, there is no salvation for people. Even here in this word given the church there are two important things that can be drawn together: first, the command of Jesus saying, “Go, go into all the world.” This is the way of revealing that Jesus, the one raised from the dead and alive forever, believed in by the church and accepted by the church has become the source of life for the church and so the church lives. The going to preach the gospel to the whole world is the proof of the living nature of the church. The church cannot put this command aside if it is still the Christian church and thus the church. And that going out will be demonstrated in many different forms: there is the going literally, there are those who cannot go and so send messengers by way of supporting them in many different ways – money, yes those things that can support the work of God. It says here that there is not yet a limit to God as to where he can go, that is all places are opened by God – all places, all venues so that the church can go proclaim this resurrection of Jesus from the dead. This is the picture here in this world spoken of here: “Go into the world.” That is to say, the church cannot choose the place but must go preach in every venue and there is nothing which can block the church because God it is who has already opened the road, opened that place so that the church can enter proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus. The thing to be done, spoken of here is the proclamation of the gospel and so with that it is not of the church or what constitutes it or knowledge or wisdom which is carried in this going out into the world but the salvation of God in Jesus Christ based especially in that resurrection from the dead. And so whatever proclamation is made outside of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead then a proclamation like a piece of straw. All the sermons, all the work demonstrating the preaching, all the proclamation if it is not based in the resurrection from the dead then it is nothing. Yes, even all the work born of faith, whatever it is, which is not based in that resurrection from the dead is null and void. And so the living church, the church which already has what gives it life is because of its living Lord who has already ascended into heaven. So the church works, yes, the church preaches and proclaims that salvation of God, and it displays and makes it clear with the work that it does. Because of this the resurrection is already here among us, that life-giving-ness. It is already placed with us by God for us, that is, for whom God waits, for us now is the accomplishment of these commands. The church must do this for the church has not been given a choice whether she wants to do it and so does or doesn’t want to do it and so stops. No! For according to the way the church will accomplish this command will be made alive but not doing it will lead it to death. So we must work, says the Lord, while it is still day for the night will come when one cannot work anymore.\textsuperscript{80} It is still day, so go. The Lord however, who sends and makes the church go, it says here, has his responsibility too. He does not send only but he will say here that he will place authority with those he sends, be with those he sends in order that the messengers will conquer all the powers and authority which there are here on earth and blocks it from accomplishing the work for which it is sent and thus it wins. This is not done but he will place with and give those he send all the power and authority it needs to finish that thing which cannot be done by flesh in what makes it human – and he knows this – and that is what Jesus said here: the believers know all things and so we the church can do it.

Lastly, a great strength this is to the church, there before the work which is to be done in what makes the church the church that is the knowledge and understanding that the Lord will not separate from it but is with it forever until the close of the age.\textsuperscript{81} And so as Jesus who already ascended living into heaven then the church must also follow him when that work which the Lord has sent it is done. And so, be of good strength, ladies and gentlemen, accomplish well the orders that the Lord has

\textsuperscript{79} 1 Corinthians 15:12-14
\textsuperscript{80} John 9:4
\textsuperscript{81} Matthew 28:20
placed with us the church so that we might hear that word of grace already shared with the smallest and also intended for the great rulers: “Enter into the joy of the Lord.”

Glory be to God the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit as it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen.

82 Matthew 25:21
17. Rasolonanahary Rodin Emmanuël

Aoka hivavaka isika:


Ry Ray Masina ô! Manamasina anay amin'ny fahamarinana amin'ny teninao no fahamarinana, Amen.

Ry fiangonana malala! Ho aminareo rehetra anian ny fahasoavan'Andriamanitra sy ny fiadanana azy amin'Andriamanitra Rainitsika sy Jesosy Kristy Tompo. Amen.

Efápolo andro katroka tao aorin'ny nitsanganany tamin’ny maty no mbola nitoeran’i Jesosy tetra amin’izao tontolo izao sy nisehoany tamin’ny mpianatra vao nakarana tany an-danitra Izy. Ainy izany venandro lehibe eo amin’ny tantaran’ny fomajona izany no tsiahihvintsi amin’ity andro alakamisy ity, dia ny nampakarina ny Tompo Jesosy ho any an-danitra. Ainy tapitra hatreo ny an-danitra nivahinianany tety. Tsy mora anefa ny latepano nandri’i Jesosy vao tonga hatreo fa tsy maintsy nisedra zava-tsatrota tokoa Izy, dia ny fankahala vana izay teo amin’izao tontolo izao. Ka ny lalan’ny fihatrehana sy ny fijaliana tsy maintsy nombany mba hahatonga Azy ho mpandresy, fa nihikanaka ny havoana aloha sy nandalo an’ny Gologota dia vao nandova ny voninahitra. Tao anatin’izany rehetra izany dia ny fitiavana no zava-dehibe taminy. Fa nihazona hatrimin’ny farany ny fahatokiana ny Rainy Izy, fa ny Rainy dia tia Azy ka tsy handao na hahafy Azy: izany no atao hoe “mahatoky hatrimin’ny fahafatesana”. Hafa noho izany no hitany tamin’ny mpianatra, hafa satria raha nosamborina Izy dia samy nitsoka nanavotra aina izy ireo afa-tsy i Petera izay nambaran’ny soratra masina fa nanaraka Azy teny lavidavitra teny, nefa dia nadâ ho tsy mahafantatra sy tsy nanampifandaisana taminy akory. Raha teo atanin’ny fangirifiriana sy fanaintainana Izy dia irey tena, lavytriy ny mpampionona, amin’ny fahoriana tsy misy ohatran’izany, eny fa na dia hatrimin’ny Rainy aza dia noheveriny fa nanary Azy ka nian sostso Azy nanao hoe: “Andriamanitra ô, Andriamanitra ô! Nahoa no dia mahafoya Ahy Ianao?” Fa manonja ny manjo raha hoentina irey lahy, fa ny entan-

50
jaray no mora zaka. Ankoatra an’i Jaona sy ireo vevihavy, ny mpianatra sisa dia samy nilefa sy nisitririsitrika avokoa.


17. Rasolonanahary Rodin Emmanuël (Translation)

Let us pray:

O Lord Jesus, we thank you for your demonstration of great love which you revealed to us in your remaining with us in your suffering, in your love and understanding when you visited here on earth. Now you will return to your Father so thank you because you did not only leave at this time but you left many messages which has calmed the fear and trembling within us. For even if you are in heaven you still go with us anyway in this world. And so thank you because even if you are there in glory and blessedness we know and our hearts trust that you are closest to us, Jesus. You will be thanked for our freedom to celebrate this great day, your ascension into heaven. And so we hope and believe according to the word you left that you will come for sure, still to receive us in this world, lift us to heaven as well. For you said, where you dwell there will your servants dwell.\(^{83}\) So bless your word to be proclaimed at this time. Thank you, Lord. Amen.

[The text is cited and read and the liturgical formulae are pronounced.]

Forty days exactly after his resurrection from the dead it was that Jesus remained here in this world and appeared to his disciples before ascending into heaven. And at that great appointed time in the story of salvation which we remember on this Thursday the Lord ascended into heaven and so his days of sojourn here ended. The path of Jesus before he came to this point was not easy however he had to be tested by many difficult things, the hatred here in this world. And so the road of humility and suffering were required for him to pass through before he could become the victor. First the wounding and then he passed by Golgota before he inherited glory. Within all this love was the great thing for him for he held tightly to the end his trust of his Father for his Father loved him and would not abandon or leave him and that is what we mean by being faithful unto death.

Something different was seen with the disciples, different because when he was captured the each fled to save their lives except Peter who, Holy Scriptures say, followed him a ways but then disavowed knowing him or having any relationship with him at all. There in the bitterness and stinging he was really alone, far from the comforter and there was never suffering like that. Yes for he even thought that his Father had abandoned him and he cried out saying, “O God, O God! Why have you abandoned me?”\(^ {84}\) Why is it that you abandon me for what befalls rises up like waves if a man carries it himself, carrying it with someone makes the load lighter. Other than John and those women, the rest of the disciples each ran away and hid and again when Jesus rose from the dead and they made the true news known that Jesus was risen from the dead they were too surprised where they should have rejoiced. It was like that when Jesus appeared to them. They did not shout at all, run and greet him but the but they were somewhat amazed only, out of breath and surprised. This touched the heart of Jesus. This is the reason he gave them blame, because they didn’t believe. And now, as we have listened to read, we have come to the [tsotsoromamba?] to part, Jesus will not be held any longer and the eyes of the disciples saw how everything happened. And were they still hard of heart and would not believe anyway on seeing him? Jesus had already said, however, that in a little while you will see me, but you will see me again and your hearts will be happy.\(^ {85}\) There is nothing that will take away your joy. There in their parting from Jesus it was said according to what we see in Luke chapter 24:52, for they had just had the greatest joy there on their parting. Isn’t that a bit strange? The loved one has just left. And it is now at this time that we beloved church are enticed to believe and go to

\(^ {83}\) John 14:3

\(^ {84}\) Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34 (cf. Psalm 22:1)

\(^ {85}\) John 16:16
him, appreciate and praise and celebrate him, and for thanking and for appreciating him because of that great thing he has done for us then do what he left as a message. He sends his disciples to go and preach the good news and sends us too. The love of God for the sinner is what is to be preached. Jesus offered his life in place of the sin of the evil doers is what is to be proclaimed. He it is who forgives sin. He it is who justifies. He it is who is Lord of peace and eternal life. He will not push away all who approach him. And he advises and saves. He gives more than what is asked of him. Good and blessings he adds to those who believe and trust him. The people saved cannot sit around doing nothing but must serve and Jesus is with and blesses those who do the work of God according to the word of hopefulness he gave and so the reward which he gave those doing good work and reliable in their service, in his business will have a portion, a place in God at the end. And so here it is: Jesus gave his word that he would be at the side of his disciples always. The one who works does the work of God. But not this alone but he sent the Holy Spirit into the world, for the disciples, and so even if the work of preaching the gospel is great and hard then we would not be alone. “I will send the adviser,” he says, and the Holy Spirit came and resided with the disciples and resides with us, too. And so it is for people to know in truth better the will of God according to what Jesus says in John chapter 6, verses 39-40. That is the work of the Holy Spirit with the disciples who do the work of the Lord. This is what is said in those verses of Holy Scripture and this is the will of the one who sent me that he will not allow any of those given me to be lost but I will raise him up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father – the getting eternal life for all who see the Son and believe in him and the raising of him up on the last day. The Holy Spirit teaches us the will of God so that all people will go the way he shows and we will go and preach God by the proclamation of the Word and the preaching of it with ourselves and our lives and their reception and their faith in Jesus Christ as their savior.

Dear friends in the Lord, when it is even clear among us like this what Jesus has done here at the end of his sojourn before his ascension into heaven, when the message commanding us to do the work of God is clear then, rise up and go for your Lord send you. Amen.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen.
21. Randrianirina Dieu Donné

Soatanana Anniversary: Text Mark 16:15-20

Ny Marka toko faha 16, andininy fahà 15 ka hatramin’ny faha 20, vakiana amin’ny anaran’i Jesosy. “Ary hovy Jesosy tamin’ny mpianany: Mandehana any amin’izao tontolo izao ianareo, ka mitoria ny filazantsara amin'ny olombelona rehetra. Izay mino sy atao batisa no hovonjenia; fa izay tsy mety mino no hohelohina. Azy izay fampantarana izao no hanaraka izay mino: hanoaka demonia amin’ny anarako izy; hiteny amin'ny fiteny izay tsy mbola hainy izy; handray manarana izy; ary na dia misotro zava-mahafaty aza izy, dia tsy hampaninona azy izany; hametra-tanana amin'ny marary izy, dia ho sitrana ireny. Azy Jesosy Tompo, rehetra nileny taminy, dia nampiakarina ho any an-danitra ka nipetra ko an-kavanan’Andriamanitra. Fa izy ireo kosa dia lasa ka nitori-teny eny tontolo eny, ary ny Tompo niara-niasa taminy ka nanamana ny teny taminy’n’famantarana izay zombi azy”.

Ry Ray Masina ô, manamasina anay amin’ny fahamarinana fa ny teninao no fahamarinana, Amen.

Ho aminareo rehetra anie ny fahasoavana sy ny fiadanana avy amin’Andriamanitra Raïntsika sy i Jesosy Kristy Tompo.

Araka izay efa nohazavaina teo, izay efa niarahantsika namaky, ny Marka toko faha 16, ny andininy fahà 15 ka hatramin’ny faha 20, izay tsy hafa fa ilay nosoratan’i Matio ao amin’ny Matio toko faha 28 ny andininy fahà 18 ka hatramin’ny faha 20, dia tsy hafa fa anisan’ny anankiray amin’ny teny hafatra farany izay napetra dry ny Tompo tamin’ny mpianany ny mpianatra mialoha ny nialany teto amin’izao tontolo izao ko niakarany tany an-danitra, araka izay nambaran’ny teny ao amin’ny andininy fahà 20. Rehefa hafatra, raha teny farany, dia miara-manaiky isika fa mirakitra zava-dehibe izany satria azo lazaina koa fa fehin’ny fanambarana rehetra, fehin’ny fampianarana rehetra, ho fehin’ny asa rehetra izay nataon’i Jesosy fony izy tety ambonin’ny tany, ka apetra mazava tsara mba hotohizan’ireo mpianatra, fehin-teny apetra dry ny Raïamandreny mba hazoto hiasa ny mpianatra. Koa hijery takelaka amin’ireo hafatra lehibe izay napetra dry ny Tompo isika.


Izany hoe ilay fomba nahefandarantsika mazava tsara, mazava kokoa an’Andriamanitra, dia tsy misy lalanà hafa fa ao amin’ny Jesosy. Izy no mpaniraka. Azy izao teny nomena antsika izao dia manondro tsara koa izay nirehina dia tsapa fa ny 11 lahy izay nambaran’ny tenin’Andriamanitra eto fa anasin’ireo izay nisehonan’i Jesosy matetika taorian’ny nitsanganany tamin’ny maty.

fe-petra izany, izay no antsoina hoe Apostoly. Ary misy antony manokana io satria tsy hafa fa amin’ny maha vavolombelona nahita azy, dia ireo no nandray, ireo no tahaka ny kitapo, ireo no tahaka ny vatsy izay nandray am-pahafenoany ny hafatra rehetra, ny fampianaranana rehetra izay avy amin’i Jesosy, izay tsapa fa avy amin’Andriamanitra Ray ihany koa. Ka izany indrindra no maha hafa manokana izany Apostoly izany satria ny Apostoly no nandray am-pahafaliana ny fampianaranana sy ny toro-marika rehetra izay nomen’i Jesosy.

Ary izany asan’ny Apostoly izany, izany fisian’ny Apostoly izany, ny sehatra nanatanterahan’ny Apostoly ny asany dia tsy hafa fa ny fiangonona izay ananantsika izao. Ao amin’ny Apostoly no misy ny fanorenanana ny fiangonona satria ny fampianaranana natoa’n’ny asan’ny Apostoly, azo tamin’i Jesosy Kristy Tompo, izay tsy hafa fa Andriamanitra tenany, izay no fampianaranana ataoa’ny fiangonana. Ka izay no maha Apositolika ny fiangonana, ary izay koa no anavahana ny fiangonona amin’ny karazana fikambanana, amin’ny karazana fivoriana samihafa eo amin’ny tontolon’ny fiangonona, dia ny fampianaranany tsy manaraka ny an’ny Apostoly, satria ny Apostoly no aho antoka fa nandray am-pahafenoana ny fampianaranana natoa’n’i Jesosy. Ka raha Jesosy ary no mpaniraka, na Andriamanitra no mpaniraka, ary raha ny Apostoly no irahina dia tsapa izany fa Andriamanitra no maniraka ny fiangonona. Andriamanitra no maniraka ny fiangonona, Andriamanitra no miteny ny fiangonona. Hanao inona?


Andriamanitra no mpampiasa, Andriamanitra no mpaniraka, ary satria Andriamanitra no mikendry ny tanjona ny amin’ny izany asa fanirahana ataoeny izany, dia ny hamonjena an’izao tontolo izao.


nofo, izay ateraky ny fanahy izany no zanak’Andriamanitra, izay ateraky ny Fanahy. Ka na dia vitan’i Jesosy aza ny asa, na dia feno aza ny fanantaraterahan’Andriamanitra Ray ny asam-pamonjena, dia ny Fanahy no mipetraka ao amin’ny olona indray. Ary mba hahazoan’ny olona hipetraka ao amin’ny Fanahy ka hahazoany indray ny famonjena, mba hahazoany mitombo eo amin’ny sehatry ny fibe bahana, dia nirahin’ny Ray, nirahiny ny Fanahin’ny Ray sy ny Zanaka sy ny Fanahy Masina hanatanteraka izany asa izany. Nirahiny ny Fanahy Masina ary dia nanaiky ny Fanahy Masina. Ary tsy kely ny asan’ny Fanahy Masina na dia lehibe tokoa aza ny asa nataon’i Jesosy fa nivavaka Izy hoe ity fanirahana nataon’Andriamanitra izany ity dia hoe iay olona hoe “toa misy fanambakana ao amin’Andriamanitra izany”, hoy izy, “satria ny zanany atao mafimafy na asa nanirahana ny zanany”.


Koa amin’izay ary dia hitantsika fa Andriamanitra dia naniraka ny tenany, Andriamanitra dia Izy mijitsy no nanao izao asa fitoriana ny filazantsara izao. Andriamanitra no nanolotra izany asa fitoriana ny filazantsara izany, Andriamanitra no nanatanteraka, ary rehefa vitany amin’ny


Ary izay mampahera, ry Havana, ary izay mahafraly ny olona amin’izao fetey izao, tso mba tahaka ny mpaniraka efa fantatsika Andriamanitra, tso mba tahaka ny mpaniraka rehetra izay miala ny andraikitra fa dia mameatra fa ny andraikitra feno amin’izay irahiny Andriamanitra ka mameatra izany asa izany ho antsika tsirairay avy. Fa ambarany tokoa fa “indro Izaho momba anareo mandrakariva ambara-pahatonga ny fahataperan’izao tontolo izao”, raha hain’ny olona ny manaraka azy. Fa huy i Marka kosa eto, ary izany amin’ny fahahin’Andriamanitra ho amin’ny fahalahana hanao amin’ny fisian’ny alalan’ny famponjena ny Andriamanitra.

mampifaly indrindra, Andriamanitra tsy mamela ny iraka ho irery, Andriamanitra tsy mamela ny mpanompony ho irery, fa na dia “amin’izao tontolo izao aza no ahitanareo fahoriana’, hoy izy, “matokia fa izaho efa nandresy izao tontolo izao”. Ary izany fandresena efa nananany izany, izany fandresena efa nandreseny an’izao tontolo izao izany, izany koa no omeny anao, izany hery izany no atafiny anao, izany hery izany no andefasany anao sy anirahany anao hahazoanao manatanteraka izany asa masina izany.

Koa dia mahafaly izany fa raha manao ny asa isika dia tsy manao ny asa irery, fa raha manao ny asa isika dia teo anatrehan’ny asan’Andriamanitra, koa dia omban’ny heriny sy ny fitahiany ary omban’ny fahefany koa amin’izay rehetra ataoantsika. Koa ifaliantsika izany, indrindra fa amin’izao faha 110 taona izao, fa sady handinihantsika tena ny amin’izay efa nataoantsika tany amin’ny lasa no tombanantsika koa, hitafiantsika hery vaovao hahazoantsika miatrika ny 110 taona manaraka. Ary izany dia mba hananan’i Tompo fifaliana rehetra tonga izy hijery ny asa ka hamantatra izay nataoantsika, dia mba hioty vokatra amin’izany fitsenana lehibe ataoantsika izany. Koa isika koa afaka hiteny eo anatrehan, hitondra tafa mahafinaritra hanao hoe: “Tompo o inty aho sy ny olona rehetra, ny zanaka maro efa nomenao ahy”.

Voninahitra anie ho an’Andriamanitra Ray sy ny Zanaka sy ny Fanahy Masina izay efa azy hatramin’ny taloha indrindra ka ho mandrakizay, Amen.
21. Randrianiarina Dieu Donné (Translation)

As has already been explained, that which we already read together, Mark 16:15-20 is none other than what Matthew wrote in Matthew chapter 28 verses 18-20 which is none other than one among the last messages which the Lord placed with his disciples before his departure from this world and his ascension into heaven as the word announces in verse 20. When it is a message then we all together accept that it preserves an important thing because it can be said also that the proclamation has come to a close, all the teaching has come to a close, all the work that Jesus did here on earth has come to a close and so it [the final message] is placed very clearly so that it is continued by the disciples – a closing word put by the Elder in order that his disciples might be zealous in working. And so we look at a sheet from those great messages the Lord placed with us. Inside those many ideas which one might like to proclaim, inside that last message placed, one great step for a gift of underlining is that of sending. Sending, this is one great subject placed by the Lord in this last message he placed: ‘sending.’ And even there before the word of God throughout the Bible, this is the name given this piece of Holy Scripture: “That great sending (commission)” “la grande commission.” And so it is a great subject in the Word of God, that is, a message placed by Jesus, the sending.

It is clear in and of itself that it is God who sends because Jesus speaks here. For that full proclamation given by God accomplished here among us humans, that which John proclaimed, that “word became flesh and dwelt among us,” that is that manner in which we have come to understand very clearly, even clear from God is that there is no other way but in Jesus. He is the one who sends. And this word given us now shows well also the reason for the sending, one senses that the eleven men to whom this Word of God was proclaimed here were among those to whom Jesus revealed himself often after his resurrection from the dead. And at this time it is over, the meeting here on the Mount of Olives is already over. And so these eleven men less Judas, appointing them as apostles. The apostles have a special name, have a special responsibility, and there is none like it. These eleven with Judas and with Paul, these are the Apostles because there is a restriction on that work called “apostle.” And so the work of the apostles we will look at in the second chapter. But the restriction sought after in the person who can be called an apostle are these: the person who is a witness who saw the work of Jesus from his baptism by John, all the work he did, his death, his resurrection from the dead and his ascension into heaven. This is what is said in the restrictions, what we call an apostle. And there is a special reason for this which is none other than what makes him an witness who has seen, those who have received, those who are like a brief case, those who are like the food for the journey who receive fully all the messages, all the teachings that come from Jesus, which we believe to come from God as well. And this indeed is what makes this apostle very special because the apostle receives with the joy all the teaching and the suggestions that Jesus gave.

And that work of the apostles, the existence of the apostles, the field in which the apostles accomplished their work is none other than the church which we have now. There with the apostles is the foundation of the church because the teaching which was done by the work of the apostles, received from the Lord Jesus Christ is none other than God himself. That is the teaching done by the church and that is what makes the church apostolic and that too is what distinguishes the church from the kinds of organizations, from the kinds of different meetings here in the world of the churches their teachings which do not follow the that of the apostles because the apostles are trustworthy because they received fully the teaching that Jesus did. And if Jesus is the sender or God is the sender and if

86 John 1:14
87 John 14:6
the apostles were sent then it is felt that God it is who sends the church. God it is who sends the church. God it is who speaks to the church, to do what? Preach the gospel, proclaim the good news of salvation, the work of salvation which God has done in Jesus Christ. This it is which they proclaim and there is no reason for hesitation for the center of the teaching made by the apostles, the center of the preaching done by the apostles is this: founded upon the proclamation of the resurrection from the dead of Jesus Christ. Jesus proclaims, Jesus when he speaks carries the people, makes known the goodness of God, carries the people to know, leads the people to believe in that kingdom of God for the accomplishment of my understanding of it has been placed with the apostles, to carry and share the kingdom of God which is none other than that Jesus is there always, he who was raised from the dead. This is the gospel, this is the promise of that salvation and so that is the level of the proclamation of the apostles. Preach that gospel. Proclaim so that the whole world will know this preaching the gospel. God placed the responsibility with the apostles so that it would be clearer at the appointed time which we are in now. God speaks to the church, sends the church, says to the church in order to proclaim the gospel of salvation, in order to announce the work of God done by Jesus Christ because of the accomplishment of salvation so that people can receive that salvation and so that the can also receive entry into the kingdom of God. And we will yet know and the church will yet receive that work for which it is sent by preaching the gospel here. And there is therefore one important thing which the church must know. And it was already proclaimed by sermons here: the authority received to do this work, the authority received to accomplish this work according to what Jesus already proclaimed before in this word according to the writing of Mark, that is: “there will be signs with it, preach the word in all the world and the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word with signs accompanying them.” Even if it is the church which is sent, even if it the church which is sent, even if the church completes the work the church must remember that it is authority which comes from the Son of God because that work sending to proclaim the salvation of God is God’s work, the work of God placed by him with the church, the work of God for which he sends the church, the work of God for which he placed his trust in the church. And so if it goes according to the conditions given by the church to go about the entire world to preach that word of God then the knowledge of this word from God must be in the heart eternally. The church must know aslo the way in which this work is to be accomplished which God placed with it. And because God is the employer, God is the sender, and because God is the one the who has set the goal concern this work of sending which he does – the salvation of the whole world, the demonstration of the enormity of the work in the church, in order to demonstrate before the church that this work is his before he sent the church, then he himself indeed sent himself; God indeed is the lord of the work. God indeed is the sender. He the Lord it is how came to send and that is what makes him God.

If we look at the Trinity, when we teach about the Trinity that often we would understand the Trinity in what makes God love, that good community which there is in the Father and the son and the Holy Spirit, that communitly which is bound by love, mutual support, that is how we understand the Trinity. But in this work of mission, work commission by God to do in the church and revealed in his being then one among them by which we know the Trinity also is sending. God sends himself. When God would save the world he sent himself and so then the Father and the Spirit stood and sent the Son to become flesh in the world. The Son was sent who is felt to be God made flesh here on earth and the sender of the Son is none other that the Father and the Holy Spirit. According to the many words of God which we will see and proclaim specifically is that which is found in John chapter 3 verse 16: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that he who believes in him will not die but have eternal life.” As is said here, God with this portion of Holy Scripture is none other than the Father and the Spirit and the one sent is none other than God himself that is his Son. So God sends himself before he sends the church, so it is himself indeed who does this work, himself indeed who accomplishes this work; and so salvation is Gods’ work. God does not seek another thing in the accomplishment of this but he himself he sends and so the Spirit and the Father send the Son.
And when the work of salvation was done by the Son here on earth, he descended here to
earth, he passed through many trials, yes even his life was taken for this work, when it was finished
according to the word he gave us here, he ascended to the Father, he returned to the one who sent him
and that we will see in the great prayer that Jesus made in John chapter 17. The beginning by the
Father of the work for which he sent him was accomplished well and good and Jesus accepted the
sending of Yahweh God when he ascended into his glory, and sat at the right side of God not at all
because he wanted to escape this world and escape the work which was done, god does not abandon
the believers, the work which he has already begun but the Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit
and so Jesus says, “I will not leave you orphaned but when the time comes I will send you the Spirit
of Truth which will make known to you all things, comfort you, cause you to be strong in your
faith.”

Because even if God had finished the work of salvation, even if Jesus had accomplished it,
even if he had ordered the various prophets to accomplish it, and even if there were many witnesses to
the resurrection from the death, many people still didn’t receive it, many people did not approach.
This is not something received by the mind, not something received by the human spirit, that which
God has done in salvation. But if it is not the Spirit of God which offers, if it is not the Spirit of God
which enlivens that in people then they are not able to receive it. It is not wisdom, it is not
understanding, it is not ability which get this but God who is Lord. He alone it is who can do this.

And in order to receive that work of salvation done by Jesus Christ, done by God by means of his Son
then the Holy Spirit was sent by the Son and the Father to do what? To preach the news here on earth
and which John says in chapter three, “one one will see the kingdom of God if they are not born again
for what is born of the flesh is flesh and what is born of the Spirit is…”

And that which is born of the Spirit…” and so even if Jesus finished his work, even if God the Father’s accomplishment
of with work of salvation was full, the Spirit places in a person again and so the person is able to
remain in the Spirit and is getting again salvation in order to increase the field of repentence so he sent
the Spirit of the Father and the Son to accomplish this work. He sent the Holy Spirit and the Holy
Spirit accepted and the work of the Holy Spirit is not small even if the work of Jesus was greater for
he begged that this commission made by God is said there is something like a fraud in God he said
because his Son did fairly hard work but, it is said, that he doesn’t know the work of the Spirit. And
the revealing of this by Jesus: “If there is some one who speaks ill of the Holy Spirit they will not
receive forgiveness of sin.” And so if we think that the work of the Holy Spirit is somewhat easy,
the Spirit is made to do all which accomplishes the responsibility for the work of the Son was harder
because it ended there on the cross, right? Great is the work which God did in salvation in offering
his Son but great, too, is the work that God has done by way of the Spirit and the Holy Spirit will be
sent by the Son and the Father to carry the preaching of news to the world. The Holy Spirit was sent,
he accepted that commission. And that accomplishing of the work of God will be worked by the
Spirit for it is not God alone or the understanding of humans, that which is delineated greatly in the
work of the proclamation made by God. Yes for even if the Father who is worth of respect according
to the humbling which Jesus performed saying, “The father is that one of great love, then still sent
also is the Father, because the Holy Spirit and the Son send the Father and offer to the world what has
already stood up to the enemy of God. When salvation was accomplished, when the new birth was
done, offered by God again, they sent the Father to treat this world who is already the enemy of the
world and already raised up his anger, showing his anger in the striking of Jesus Christ there on the
Cross. And because the holiness of God is not worthy and because the holiness of God is not worthy
then Jesus was struck, Jesus was speared, he was killed. The real enemy of God is this world because

88 John 14:26
89 John 3:6
90 Matthew 12:32
of my sin and your sin. However, because of the accomplishment of the work of salvation, however because of the accomplishment of the messenger made by the Holy Spirit in the new birth, required by the Spirit and the Son and the Father in order to reconcile with this world, that we will be able to cry out saying, “Our relative” when we pray. That frees us to say when we pray saying, “Our father in heaven,” for if not work of the Father and the Son which required the Father to reconcile, sent the Father into the world to reconcile, there is nothing which we would get from it because before God our human work is rotted and loathsome and is not worthy of the glory of God, not even one, says the Apostle Paul in Romans chapter 3: “There is no one worthy of the Glory of God because all of us have sinned.” But because of the work of renewal done by the Spirit and the work of salvation done by God, done by the Son the Son and the Spirit force the Father so that we receive reconciliation in the world. Then the Father accepts and received us as children, and that is what makes such a big thing out of preaching the gospel, “those who believe and are baptized” will receive Jesus as Son because of the work of the Spirit and the new birth, because of the work of salvation which the Son has already done. The Father receives that so accepts us for children by way of baptism. As the proclamation of the gospel of salvation which is already done by God in Jesus Christ. And so with that we see that God sent himself. God it is who offered that work of preaching the gospel. God it is who accomplished it and when he finished he offered it to the Church and around the church. And that the church must understand as the work of God, the work of commissioning and accumulated by God by himself. And so the church of God will do, will accomplish that work of his and so must do like the way God does the work. The church did not send non-Christians when it preached the gospel. That is not good work. The church did not send people from outside the church when it did this work. If sending, the church it is which is sent, but the church alone must carry, the church must be the sender, but the church alone must be sent. And the church which is sent which is sent by God, having the responsibility being placed by God and the command will stand up as senders again, who is it that is sent? Me, you, you, me, us here in the church are those who do the work like that done by the Trinity. We send each other, we cause each other to be prayed for, we strengthen each other according the example given by Jesus Christ, placed with the Apostles and announced by the apostles at the foundation of the church. From the teaching of the apostles, the church agreed, the church worked together, the church mutually supported in that work of the commission. To repeat again, the church didn’t consider the order of the church lest it be false again, and there are non-Christians, there are ombiasa\textsuperscript{91} sent to do evangelism. If by chance he is a non-Christian, if by chance he is a ombiasa, they have not yet accepted that work of salvation but you the church, you who have already been called children, you who are already now a part of the kingdom of God, upon you is the message placed.

And now is the 110\textsuperscript{th} year of our being here, this time we have now is 110 years of successive work of God, the work of God given by the church, that work of God sending messengers. And one aspect revealed by that is the work of calling special people by way of the special work, special responsibility. And if at this 110\textsuperscript{th} anniversary is looked at then you are called already, to do what? And for that reason we have a role, we have a role in the work of what makes us apostles for the real apostles are those people. For because of the responsibility which is specially in the making of it because of the responsibility of the commission, accomplished in the field of the church, that teaching which does not change – the teaching of the Apostles which is still held on to until today, that work of Jesus which those apostles continued. Those apostles were appointed directly saying, “Go into the world and preach the gospel to all people,” to do what? In order that salvation might be received, in order that people would truly believe that word because the world of God brings forth faith for us and the hearing by people of that word of God rest largely on there being people willing to be sent. As is proclaimed by Paul in Romans chapter 10 verse 15: “How will people believe in him who they do not

\textsuperscript{91} Traditional healers, medicine men.
know and how are they to believe in one whom they have never heard and how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? That is the work of the apostle, this is the message given the apostles at that time which has come to each of our ears, we comes directly to each of us, because of the teaching of the apostles which doesn’t change, because of the work of God done by the church and the church alon accomplishes this work by the agreement to work together and it is what it aims at in that is nothing other than the preaching of the gospel, the receiving by people of faith and the accomplishment fo that faith for salvation and holiness. And what encourages the other, according to what makes people happy at this festival now, God is not like the sender we already know, not like the commissioners who abandon their responsibility but he places full responsibility in those he Sends and places that work also for us individually for he proclaims that he is by our side until the close of the age when it is known by people to follow him. For Mark says here, on the other hand, his is that commission to be done. And God proves this really for he works with him, works with us, journeys with us and he reveals that in many different ways by means of the strengthening, with many different miracles. This is his weakness, God will not allow his messengers be alone. God will not leave his servants alone but even if my suffering was given for this world, believe that I have already saved this world. That is true faith. That word which he counsels you and makes you set apart in order that you can do this holy work. And so this make us happy for if we do the work we do not do the work alone but if we do the work he is there before the work of God and so with his strength and his blessing and with his authority too is all that we do. And so we will be happy indeed on this 110th anniversary for and we will also consider what we have done. The Holy Spirit will accomplish us too, clothe us with new strength so we can attend the 110 years following. And that is in order that we might have by the Lord joy wehne he comes to to see the work and examine what we have don, in order that he may pick the fruit and that great greeting we do. And so we also may speak before him, carry a beautiful conversation saying, “Lord here I am and all the people, the many children you gave me.”

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and will be forever. Amen.

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92 The text is quoted freely and is really from Romans 10:14.
93 Matthew 28:20
Anisan’ny andininy mampiady hevitra ny mpandinika ny soratra masina ity perikopa eto ity. Maro no milaza fa tsy i Marka no nanoratra azy fa soratra nanampy taty aoriana izany. Toa nisy fikendrena tokoa ny nanampiana ireto andininin-tsoratra masina ireto, satria raha nijanona tao amin’ny andininy faha 8 ny filazantsaran’i Marka dia tsy ho niely ny filazantsatsara satria tsy sahy nilaza ireto vehivavy, tsy nisy rahateo fanirahana ny mpianatra satria mbola tsy nihaona tamin’i Jesosy izy ireo ary tsy misy rahateo ny filazanta ny mpianatra amin’ny fiakaran’i Jesosy Kristy any an-danitra. Raha mijery ny andininy faha 9 ka hatrimin’ny faha 20 tokoa isika dia toa nanamarina ny maha olon-kafa ny nanoratra io perikopa io ny zavatra voalaza ao, fa toa manolotra tantaranana Paska hafa tisy ifandraisany amin’ny voalaza teo aloha. Azy toa mifanohitrira mihitsy aza ny zavatra voalaza ao amin’ny teksta ao aloha, dia ny andininy voalohany ka hatrimin’ny faha 8, sy ity teksta anjarantsika eto ity. Ny famaranana ny perikopa eo ambony, ny zavatra ambarany ao amin’ny andininy faha 8 dia ny fahanginan’ireo vehivavy tsy nety nanambara ny vaovao mahafuly ary anisan’izany i Maria Magdalena. Eto amin’ny andininy faha 9 anefa, izay hanombohana ny anjarantsika, dia toa nalatsaka ho azy, na “parachuté”, ny filazana fa rehefa nitsananga Jesosy Kristy dia niseho tamin’ny Maria Magdalena, dia ilay Maria Magdalena ao amin’ny andininy perikopa voalohany ihany, ilay tsy nahtia azy fa nilazan’ny Anjely fotsiny ihany niaraka tamin’ny namany ary anisan’ny nandosiitra amin-kovitra ary nangina noho ny tahoatra. Fa eto kosa izy dia sahy nilaza tamin’ireo nomba an’i Jesosy, araka ny andininy faha 9 ka hatrimin’ny faha 10. Raha tomorina akiaky izany io perikopa io dia fandravonana ireo voalozan’ny filazantsara telo hafa taorian’ny ftsangana amin’ny maty ho fannemona izay tsy voalaza ao amin’ny tapany voalohany amin’ity perikopa ity. Ndeha ary hojerentsika tsirairay izy ireo.

Ny andininy faha 9 ka hatrimin’ny faha 10 eto dia mampahatsiara antsika izay voalazan’i Jaona ao amin’ny toko faha 20 andininy faha 16 ka hatrimin’ny faha 18 sy ny Lioka toko faha 24 ny andininy faha 9 ka hatrimin’ny faha 10; ny andininy faha 11 indray dia mitovy amin’ny voalaza ao amin’ny Lioka toko faha 24 andininy faha 11 ihany koa; ny andininy faha 12 ka hatrimin’ny faha 13 dia misy hitovizany amin’izay voalozan’i Lioka ao amin’ny toko faha 24 ny andininy 13, 15,32 ary 35; ny amin’ny andininy faha 14 dia ambaran’i Lioka amin’ny fomba tsa mivantana ao amin’ny toko faha 24 ny andininy 33,38 ary 43; ny andininy faha 15 ka hatrimin’ny faha 20 indray dia nambaran’ny mpanoratra fa niraehina ireo mpianatra hitory ny vaovao mahafuly, hanao batisa ary hanasitrana ary efa nampanantenain’i Jesosy fa tsy avelany irery ireo mpianatra ireo eto amin’izao tontolo izao; ary faranany amin’ny fampakarana an’i Jesosy ho any an-danitra izany sy ny fanatrehan’ny mpianatra tamin’ny asa rehetra izay natoany, izany dia fahita koa ao amin’ny Matio toko faha 28 ny andininy 18 ka hatrimin’ny faha 20 sy ny Lioka toko faha 24 andininy 48 sy ny 51. Raha nijanona teo amin’ny andininy faha 9 tokoa ity filazantsaran’i Marka toko faha 16 ity dia mbola ho niondriaka tamin’ny fahoriany mandrakariva ny mpianatra satria tsy fantatra mazava izay niafaran’i Jesosy. Koai dia natao hameno izay tsy voalaza teo amin’ny faha 10 eto perikopa ity. Niseho amin’ny mpianatra mihitsy Jesosy ho fampitrakana azy ireo ary azy mba ho fampirenanena ny finoany fa marina Jesosy ka ireo izay efa nolazany tamin’izy ireo taloha dia tsy maintsy ho tanteraka. Azy tsy hoe ny olona ihany no hany hatsangany amin’ny maty fa na ny tenany koa amin’ny maha Jesosy fainana Azy dia tsy resin’ny fahafatesana. Ka izay mino azy dia hitsangana toa azy koa. Tsy ananan’ny fahafatesana fahefana intsony Izy ary izany no tiany haorina tsara amin’ireo mpianatra. Ka hozarantsika telo ny fandihinana ity perikopa ity; voalohany ny fanorenana’i Jesosy ny finoan’ny mpianany araka ny andininy faha 9 ka hatrimin’ny faha 14; ny faharoao ny andraikitra izay apetrak’i Jesosy ho an’ireo izay mino Azy, ny andininy 15 ka hatrimin’ny faha 18; ary fahatelo farany ny loharano hanovozana ny hery hanatanterahana izany andraikitra izany, andininy 19 ka hatrimin’ny 20.


68


Ny andininy farany amin’ity perikopa ity no manondro antsika ny loharanany-kery ho entintsika miasa, hiara-a-miasa amin’ny Jesosy, amin’ny mino Azy. Izany no heri ho antsika ka hahasahantsika miady amin’ny devoly mitety ireo lohasaha aloky ny fahafatesana, eny manka ny asa rehetra hanendren’i Jesosy antsika. Io no loharanany-kery ho antsika fa tsy irey isika amin’ny asa izay ataoantsika. Izany koa no tsy mbola mahafaty ny asam-pifohazana mandraka androany satria manamarna ny teniny ny Tompo ka miaza hanatontosa sy hahatanteraka izay kendrena amin’ny asam-pifohazana. Ka na dia olombelona nofo aza isika, tsy manankery eo anatrehan’ny devoly ;dia mahavoaka ny demonia kosa noho ny Anaran’i Jesosy Kristy, satria Izy no loharanana manome ny heri ny mino Azy; na dia tanana voalotona’ny halatra noho ny vono olona, noho ny kolikoly maro isan-karazany, ny tsy fahamarinana maro isan-karazany aza ny tanan’ny mino, nefa nibebeaka amin’i Jesosy Kristy izy, dia afaka mitondra fananiana no an’izay hametranyhany tanana satria ny tanany fotsiny no mipetraka eo ambonin’ny lohan’ny olona fa ny tanan’i Jesosy Kristy izay feno
holatry ny nanombahan’ny olombelona eto ambonin’ny tany no mitondra fanasitrana ho an’izay rehetra manantona Azy; ary miaraka amin’ny mino Izy amin’izany fanataneraha izany asa izany. Koa mahereza fa miara-miasa amintsika isam-potoana ny Tompo izay maniraka antsika hanao ny asany. Tsy faly maniraka fotsiny Izy fa manome anao ny fanomezam-pahasoavana samihafa, manome anao ny hery samihafa ary miaro antsika amin’izany asa rehetra izany ho voninahitry ny anarany irery ihany. Tsy hitantsika maso intsony Jesosy Kristy saingy ireo famantarana na fahagagana maro ataony amin’ny alalantsika, amin’ny asa fihazana ataontsika, na amin’ny alalan’ny jentilisa fotsiny aza hitondra soa ho antsika toy ny nataon’ny zanak’Israely tany Egypte tany Babilona dia fanehoana fa eo amintsika ary manatrika antsika hatrany hatrany Izy na dia eo ankavanany’ny Ray aza ny toeram-boninahitra hametrana Azy. Mitey izao tontolo izao Izy, haneho ny heriny amin’ny fotoana rehetra maha mety sy hiantsoantsika Azy sy fantasy fa ilana Azy, ho fanehoany ny voninahiny handresy lahatra ny tso mino ary hampahery ny mino kosa. Momba antsika Andriamanitra, manavo isan’andro isan’andro ny fombany amintsika Izy amin’ity tany malama maina izay alehantsika ity; miaro ny fimoantsika Jesosy Kristy ary mamorona finoana ho an’izay mbola tso mino koa, ambaram-pahatongan’ny fahataperan’izao tontolo izao.

This pericope is among the verses that cause researchers great discussion. Many say it was not Mark who wrote this but rather a writing that was added afterwards. And there seems to have been an intention for adding these additional verses of Holy Scripture because if we stop at the 8th verse of the Gospel of Mark then the Gospel would not have been spread because those women did not dare. There wasn’t already the sending of the disciples because they still had not met with Jesus and there was nothing regarding the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven.

If we look at verses 9 to 20 then it is rather clear that there was a different author for this pericope because they somewhat offer a different version of the Easter story which has no relationship with that said before it and even really opposes what was said from the 1st to the 8th verse and the text which we are considering. The end of the pericope above, the thing which it announces there in verse 8 was the silence of those women who were not willing to announce the good news and among them was Mary Magdalene. Here in verse 9 however which starts our portion it is as if the announcement fell on its own or parachuted in for when Jesus Christ rose he appeared to Mary Magdalene, that very same Mary Magdalene in the first pericope, the one who didn’t see him but only an angel when with her friends and who was among those who fled shivering and silent because of fear. But here she is daring to speak to them about Jesus according to verse 9 through 10. If we look at this pericope very closely then that which is said is in the other three gospels after the resurrection from the dead is comparable as filler for what is not said in the first part of this pericope.

Let us look at these individually. Verse 9 to 10 here reminds us of thwat was aid in John the 20th chapter, verse 16-18 and Luke 24: 9-10. Verse 11 again is the same as what is said in Luke chapter 24:11, too. Verses 12-13 are the same and what is said in Luke in chapter 24 verses 13, 15, 32 and 35; verse 14 Luke announces in a manner not direct in chapter 24 verses 33, 38 and 43. Verses 15 to 20 again the writer announces that these disciples were sent to preach the good news, to baptize and to heal and Jesus already gave cause for hope that he would not leave these disciples alone here in this world. Lastly is the ascension of Jesus into heaven and the face to face meeting of the disciple with the work that they would do. This is seen also in Matthew 28:18-20 and Luke 24:48, 50. If this Gospel of Mark ended there at the 8th verse then the disciples would be still be stooped in their grief forever becae they would not know clearly the end of Jesus and so this pericope fills in what is not said. Jesus truly reveals himself to the disciples to lift up their heads and to establish their faith for Jesus is true and all that he said to them before must be accomplished. And it is not only that the people will be resurrected from the dead but their selves to in what makes Jesus life, all this is not beaten by death and so whoever believes in him will rise like him too. Death no longer has any authority over him and that he wishes to establish strongly in these disciples.

And so we will divide into three parts our considering of this text. First, the establishing of Jesus the faith of his disciples according verses 9-14; the second is the responsibility which Jesus placed with those who believen in him, verses 15-18; and thirdly and lastly the water source from which to draw the strength to accomplish this responsibility, verses 19-20.

The establishing of the faith of the disciples according to verses 9 to 14: locked with fear, wrapped in sadness, with mistaken hope were these disciples when Jesus Christ died. All of them fled when he was arrested. Forgotten were allthe solutions which Jesus had made by means of the various different miracles when he still was with them on the earth. Yes for even though there was

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94 This woman theologian was one of my students at the Regional Lutheran Theological Seminary at Bezaha where I taught her Homiletics. At the time of this recording she was a Master’s student at the Graduate Lutheran Theological Seminary in Fianarantsoa.
the announcement by Jesus that he must die yet be raised on the third day, according to Mark 8:31-32, it was buried in the grief of these disciples. Because of this Jesus revealed himself to these disciples beginning with Mary Magdalene and then to the rest of the disciples. Jesus had to show himself to these disciples directly in order to create faith in them because the recounting of those first three people that proclaimed that Mary Magdalene and the two men told these disciples but they all didn’t believe. For when they all saw Jesus himself, on the other hand, at that point they were happy and had hope and faith that Jesus Christ was truly living. And that is even clearer in the other gospels. This still have force for our faith, too, for Jesus meets with us directly by way of his word preached and taught which strengthens our faith because he is not here and we do not go by sight anymore and so we believe by way of their faith that Jesus is truly alive. And the founding and growing of our faith is the work of the Holy Spirit. This protects us not to brag at having faith more than another or say that a struggle, that which we do has brought us to believe but is the work of God. Jesus gave blame to those who did not accept the proclamation they who met with Jesus before had said. We, too, have blame if we wait on Jesus to announce himself to us before we believe, for those proclaimers of his word, whether men or women should be accepted in order to receive salvation. For those who receive their word receive Jesus Christ, the lord of the word. There is no way for us to see Jesus directly anymore except by way of the word. Many among the believers, especially the Awakening need to fight the order of merit for those elders who have already passed like Mama Volahavana, Rainisoalambo, for example, in order to be revealed by Jesus. But this is not the important thing but believing his word and that life is the way we receive salvation. It is a gift of grace for very few people to have a vision of Jesus but if we endure in the faith on the other hand we will see him in his glory when we enter into eternal life. And so our daily meditation on the word of God is our daily meeting with Jesus Christ and it leads to our faith being well established and increasing and so free from fear and the worries of this life passing by the kingdom of suffering.

And we are ready, too, to proclaim to others what we have received from Jesus and that is the second thing which we see in this text, that is the responsibility which Jesus has placed on those who have him – verses 15-18. If there is something that makes people difficult to please it is those things that they believe are their possessions because, they think, they exhausted themselves for it. Yes but Christians who are still not entirely convinced by the gospel do not release for sharing their goods: money, riches, tools, ideas, teaching, for example, for others. Jesus Christ it is who is the living gospel and that he put as a responsibility with those who believe in him and so it must be spread to all people. That he placed with us who already have him to share with those who do not have Jesus. That is what really makes different this real Christian possession, that is Jesus Christ – an important possession to be desired that each should have Jesus according to the messenger whom he caused to make believers around the world – a possession which does not make one selfish who has him but compelled by the Spirit to share that with others, too. A possession that does not make one selfish but a possession beloved which causes love to be received and for the possession of the other also who yet does not have. A possession which makes one truly rich for the one that has it. This is not a possession that is simply a dream but all the riches of the spirit and so for those who are still in poverty because they don’t yet have it. What brings people not to share their possession with others is that they believe that the things they have in hand will dry up if they are shared but Jesus on the other hand, who is the real possession is enough for the one who shares and the one with whom he is shared. Jesus Christ is a gift for the whole world for each one he shed his blood there on the cross so that each one would get the forgiveness of sin. He who really has Jesus Kristy does not sleep well but is determined to share Jesus Christ every day. There is no choice of person, no choice of the type of person, no discrimination of anyone because of being one life with Jesus Christ. He does not discriminate but wants that all people be saved, share his love and the redemption he accomplished

95 John 13:20
there on the cross. This special possession is unique which is Jesus Christ because it is not made to be saved within the four walls of a safe or a bank or a house or a corral but was been make to be spred to the four corners of the world, truly around the world so that each person has it themselves. A possession that is too wondrous becaue a possession that makes one want to share it. A joyous possession carrying peace and which the world cannot take it from one who has it but rather is offered to the whole world that each might have it, too. There is more than the sharing alone, however, the responsibility of the believer left by Jesus with him is that he is still commanded to baptize believers also because this is how God adopts us for his children, as Paul the Apostle says, and our reception of the teaching, as our catechism says, and the way in which the believer receives salvation according to our portion in the word of God here.

Jesus does not just send but gives his promise to those who believe that he will offer gifts of grace as tools to accomplish the work he has given them to do in the world. Among them are the driving out of demons and the laying on of hands for healing which is set apart specially here because of the shepherds use of it when they do the “work and the strenthening.” This is a great strength to those of us who are shepherds for it is not something fashioned in the minds of people alone which we do in the “work and the strenthening” but a true command from Jesus Christ: the exorcism of demons and the laying on of hands. And so be strong, don’t fret whoever insults you, whatever sad thing happens to you in the work which you do. Jesus Christ commands you and offers the gifts of grace according to what you need to accomplish it. Our Lord is alive and we, too, are alive and he sends us to exorcise devils and heal by laying on of hands.

Often, however, it is not the work of exorcising demons along that we are used to in using this laying on of hands but if there is a person who is ill according to the flesh then it is not used. The Lord reminds me and you here today that it is not tied to demon illness alone where we can accomplish the laying on of hands but one can lay on hands for the sick and they will be healed according to the Word of God. It is for those possessed by demons only but for all the sick without discrimination for which we have authority from Jesus Christ to lay hands on them and we believe that they will be truly healed because our Jesus, who is our righteousness, has promised us. This is a great responsibility with the Lord has placed upon us shepherds. However the Lord says in Matthew, “Behold I send you out among the wolves,” and here the word is strengthened with serpents and deadly things which is to say that it isn’t, as the saying goes, something that goes by itself, following Jesus Christ and doing his work. He is our model and look at what he suffered for he ended on the cross to save us. He gave up his life because for the doing of the work of God. And so for us who follow him also we must go through suffering and difficulties of many different kinds in doing the work of God and it may cost life itself. Each of these bring death whetehr the serpent which kills by biting because there is poison in its mouth, and the deadly things there are poison, too. But Jesus strengthens the believes here not to be afraid of these things for he has given his promise that death is in our hands because we can handle the serpent for death cannot lay hold of us because we have Jesus the Life who conquered every evil power even the death of the flesh and even more the spiritual that might get us but that makes no difference to us, even if we drink something deadly.

There is a true story about an evangelist in the region of Morondava. He went through the towns preaching the gospel and one Christian youth went with him. A certain medicine man

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96 _Asa sy fampaherezana_ (literally, work and strengthening) is the term used for the service of exorcism with laying on of hands for healing in the Malagasy Protestant tradition.

97 Matthew 10:16

98 There are no poisonous snakes in Madagascar, so this might be something to be explained.

99 _Ombiasa_ – one who performs different rituals and prescribes traditional medicines for healing.
welcomed them into a certain town they were passing by and was very happy to receive them and so he prepared food for them. It was not the Word of God, however, which made this guy happy but that he could compete with these people of God because he had heard of their fame. He gave these guests a house by themselves and there served them the food – a big fish he made for the meal and when he scattered poissonous “medicine” on it then he sent his wife to bring in the guests. The food was set before each. The evangelist prayed before they ate. The young friend of the evangelist choked and so the medicine man was happy in his heart because that was the curse he had placed upon the medicine to kill these people. But this word of God which we have announced especially was what the evangelist had read and he exorcised the demon and prayed for this young man and lay hands on him. The so the broken fish-bone popped out of its own accord from his throat and there was already blood flowing. The fellow was convinced and offered himself to the Lord. Simple is the message here: God protects his people from danger and death and many examples can be taken with that. What should be underlined here too in this “handle serpents and drink poisonous things” is firstly that the trials of the believers will be many and hard in the work of preaching the gospel and may end the life. Second, the Lord protects us when we go with a straight heart before the things we know nothing about but might lead to death for us. Now be careful, dear friends, of tempting the Lord and so say “we have faith” and then with knowing that it will cause death enter or drink. Remember the word used by Jesus to answer the devil when he tempted him and jumped him to the top of the Temple for Jesus word was simple: “Don’t tempt the Lord your God.” Let us use it to be zealous only, a misplaced zealously for something that gets us in the Awakening. Zealous in the work of the Lord and so we should not do for show that I really have faith but rather, “I do this to show the glory of God like that done by the missionary, Pastor Torvik” in the southern region where the medicine man accepted to cause lightning to strike but if he wasn’t killed by the lightning then this medicine man would become a Christian. Before doing this the missionary said simply, “I would prefer first to pray for I do not protect myself but Jesus Christ whom I follow is the one who protects me from all calamities.” Three times the lightning struck the missionary and the third time it fell on the house of the medicine man and burned his skin. As a result the man was convinced. It was not the glory of Pastor Torvik which he prided himself in at that time but that he had faith and beat the work of the devil. So, Jesus Christ who protected him has protected him from all calamities. If that is what we enter into then even if we drink poison and even if we handle serpents to the glory of God then there will not be his work in us like what happened to Paul the Apostle when the boat was sinking and so was bitten by the snake. But rather if it is for bragging you endure trials that lead to death then remember that God does not go with you.

It is shown here that Jesus Christ protects us against the evil program the devil does to block our service to God. He will not allow us to be alone in this but he must protect his glory because if it is us alone then that does not protect the glory of God.

Thirdly, he will not allow us to be dying without reason if it is not the time when that should be done to us and so all the believers who are called to do the work of the Lord can give witness even unto death for the Lord protects us. Remove fear and worry for Jesus Christ is with us. Jesus Christ who sends us give us every tool, give us every strength to accomplish this all too hard work in what makes us human. However from where are we going to receive that strength? And so we enter into

100 Ody – general term for a charm or medicine used by ombiassa in their art.
101 Matthew 4:7; Luke 4:12
102 Rev. Olav Torvik, ELCA missionary to Madagascar 1949-1984. He served primarily in the Betioky Atsimo Synod, the region from which this preacher comes.
103 Acts 27:13-28:3
the third part which is the source from which the believers draw strength. The last verse in this pericope points out to us the source of strength which will allow us to work, to work with Jesus, with those who believe in him. That is the strength for us so that we might dare to fight with the devil, cross the valley of the shadow of death, \(^\text{104}\) yes, do all the work Jesus assigns us. This is the source of strength for us for we are not alone in the work which we do. That too is why the work of the Awakening has not died even until today because the Lord makes his word sure and works to accomplish and complete that which is determined by the Awakening. So even if we are people of flesh, without power before the devil, we still are able to exorcise demons because of the name of Jesus Christ for he is the source which gives strength to those who believe in him. Even the hands sullied by theivery, because of murder, because of corruption of every kind, the unrighteousness of every kind, the hands of those who believe but repented to Jesus Christ are free to carry healing to those on whom they lay hands because it is not only their hands which rest on the head of the person but the hand of Jesus Christ which is full of the scars of the crucifixion of people here on earth which carries the healing to every one who approaches him and he goes with the believers in accomplishing this work.

And so be strong for the Lord who sends us to do the work works with us every time. He is not happy to send along but gives you his various gracious gifts, gives you different strengths and protects us in all that work for the glory of his name alone. We don’t see Jesus Christ with our eyes any more however those many signs or miracles he does by way of us, in the work of the Awakening which we do, even by way of non-Christians carries good to us like that done by the children of Israel in Egypt and in Babylon, that is a revelation that he is with us and comes to us always even though he is there at the right side of the Father, the place of glory in which he was set. He traverses this world to show his strength in every time possible and he will call us and he will know that he is needed for showing his glory to convince the unbelievers and strengthen the believers as well. God is with us. He shows his ways with us every day in this dry, slippery land we go about in. Jesus protects our faith and builds faith in those who yet do not believe until the end of this age. And so accomplish the work for which God sent you. Don’t keep looking around and behind you for Jesus Christ has already called your name. He calls my name and calls all of our names. Preach the gospel of salvation. Share with those who do not yet have Jesus Christ, that most precious possession greater than pearls or diamonds in this world because they can rot away but Jesus Christ, on the other hand, will last forever and he who lasts in the faith also will last forever for him.

So all of this to God alone the glory and for strength to us to use to cross this life while awaiting Jesus Christ our Lord who will return us and bring us in again into paradise which is already prepared for all the believers when the creation of this world was not yet in view. Amen.

\(^\text{104}\) Psalm 23: 4
Appendix 4: Additional Ascension Day Sermons

5. Randriatsarafara Jean Gaston


Ry Ray masina ô, manamasina anay amin’ny fahamarinarina fa ny teninao no fahamarinarina. Amen.

Ry fiangonana malala ho aminareo rehetra anie ny fahasoaavana sy fiafanana avy amin’Andriamanitra Ray sy i Jesosy Kristy Tompo.

Andro niakarana, izany no vaninandro misy antsika amin’ity andro ity. Anisan’ny iray lehibe eo amin’ny tantaran’ny fiangonana ny andro niakarana na dia fety tso dia malaza loatra eo amin’ny Kristianina aza kanefa manana hevera lehibe tiana hambara antsika. Rehefa naira-nitoetra tamin’ny mpianatra 40 andro tetry an-tany taorian’ny nitsanganany tamin’ny maty Jesosy dia niakatra any andanitra, amin’ny teo amin’ny tendromboboitra Olivia no nisehoan’izany. Rehefa nitsangana tamin’ny maty tokoa Jesosy dia vita tamin’izay ny raharahany tety ambonin’ny tany fa ny manpiomana ny mpianany ho amin’ny asa na amin’ny maha Apostoly azy izy. Izany no anisan’ny zava-dehibe nitranga nandritra izany 40 andro niaraha ny niseho tamin’ireo mpianatra taorian’ny fitsanganana izany. Hitantsika fa niseho matetika izy tamin’izany ka nampianatra ny zavatra momba ny fanjakana’Andriamanitra, inindra indindra fa ny mihatra na misheo amin’ny raharahaha atao’ny mpianatra na Apostoly rehefa tso eo miaraaka aminy eo intsony Jesosy ilay tompon’ny hery sy fahefana izay nampitologaga an’izy ireo. Ny fototry ny amin’ny nialan’i Jesosy tso niaraka tamin’ny mpianatra na niara-dia taminy fa nankany an-danitra dia nisy zavatra tsara ho fantantsika. Te hampiseho izany zavatra izany fa vita ny raharahaha nanirahana an’i Jesosy tety ambonin’ny tany ary nitsahatra hatreo ilay atao hoe fanetren-tena fa tonga ny andro fanandratana azy am-boninahitry. Tonga mpanjakary mpanapaka izy.


Kanefa araka izay hita eto amin’ny toby misy antsika dia teny miverimberina rentsika eo amin’ny amin’ny atao hoe asa sy famapaherezana izao teny izay teny anjarantsika izao, nefa koa dia mampiseho miharihy indrindra ihany koa ny andraikity ny mpino: “izay mino sy atao Batisa no vonjena fa izay tsy mety mino no hohelohina”. Zavatra lehibe ho amin’ny asan’ny fiangonona izany amin’ny fikarakarana ny ao atao hoe fahanovana Batisa. Ary tahaha izany ihany koa ny ao amin’ny andininy faha 17 izay manao ho: “’ry izao fangatanana izao no manaraka izay mino: hamoaka demonia amin’ny anaraka izy, hiteny amin’ny fiteny izay mbola tsy hairy izy, handry manarana izy, na dia misotro zava-mahafaty aza izy dia tsy hampaninona azy izany, hametratanana amin’ny marary izy dia ho sitrana ireny”.

7. Randrianandrasana Dieu Donné


Tolotra avy amin’ny Jesosy Kristy Tompo ny fiarahabana antsika mahazo ity fotoan-dehibe ity ary miombom-bavaka eto noho ny fitahian’Andriamanitra sy ny fahasoavany izay hahafahanany miatrika an’izao sabata masina izao. Maniry raha maniry ny fahasoavany’ Andriamanitra ho antsika rehetra mba hithehirantsika ny tsara ao anatintsika ary handoavana ny ratsy kosa izay Jesosy Tompo no afaka mamaha, afaka manaisotra, afaka manadio sy manasa antsika rehetra amin’izany faharatsiana izany.


dia nitombona loatra tamin’ny nahafatesan’i Jesosy. Raha Jesosy indrindra ilay maty ka nalevina tao am-pasana dia toa very hevitra ny mpianatra, toa nisaraka tamininy ny fanantenana ilay malalany. Tsy toy ny tamin’ny nifankahitana tamininy tamin’izay fotoana izay, fa toa nisasaka izany ary izany fisasahana izany no hijerena sy hitazana, hanaoavana tombomboka fa feno fisalasalana ny mpianatra, tsy tahaka tamin’izay niarahana tamin’i Jesosy intsony. Eto anefa dia mbola mamerina ny teny izay teny mafonja; teny azo antoka mipololotra eo amin’ny vavan’ny mpamony no manendry ny mpianatra ka maniraka ary dia mitso-drano azy hahaleo hahalasana ary hahavita sy hanataneraka izao zara fanompona efa niantsaoin’Andriamanitra azy izao tamin’ny alalan’i Jesosy Kristy. Ho amin’izao tontolo izao ny fanirahana ho eto amin’ity tany ity, dia ny vazan-pany efa tany izay


azo haodina ankavia sy ankavanana izany dia mety daholo, na zipo plissê dia mety daholo tsy amantarana. Fa raha pataloa na ny lobaka izay tokony hatao aloha ny bokotra afoana afoana na antehezana aty dia tsy mety. Avy hatrany ny olona dia mitsara anao: “fa manao akory ilay olona iny no manao an’iny?”


izay nanamasinana antsika ny andraisana antsika ho anisan’ny vahoakan’ny lanitra dia
olon’Andriamanitra isika, mpanara-dia an’i Jesosy Kristy.

Tompon’andraikitra ny amin’ny fitoriana ny filazantsara izany ny Kristianina rehetra vita
batisa, any no iantefany. Ny famapaherezana omen’ny mpiandry, ny famapaherezana omen’ireo Ray
aman-d'Reny ireo amin’ny alalan’izany dia asa famelomana ny fanahy masina mba hiereretretantsika
ka hampatsiahy antsika:” ato anatiko anie ilay fanahin’Andriamanitra e! Ato anatiko ato ilay
Fanahin’Andriamanitra, ka nahoano no dia ataoako sahala amin’izao? Nahoano no dia hitsakitsahako
sahala amin’izao?” Tsy henjana dia henjana anefa ilay tenin’Andriamanitra noho ny Fanahy, fa hoy
Jesosy hoe: “izay miteny ratsy ny zanaka dia mbola hahazo famelankeloka ihany” fa izay miteny
ratsy ity Fanahy ity, mandrakizay mandrakizay dia tsy hisy fanafodiny intsony izany.
Vavolombelon’ny filazantsara isika, napetraka eto amin’izao tontolo izao. Raha napetraka eto dia
miara-tompon’andraikitra ny amin’ny filazantsra isika ny filazantsaran’ny famojena isika rehetra.
Anehoan’i Jesosy porofo ny fanorehana antsika eto miainga avy amin’ny alalan’ny batisa izany. Ny hevitr ny
teny samy manana ny fandraisany azy ny olona. Ao no misy zavatra mahagagy ary ity dia
fampiroenana tanteraka antsika amin’ny maha vavolombelona marina itokisanana. Manomboka
hatramin’ny andron’ny epistily dia matoky sy mino ny Kristianin’Andriamanitra matoa mbola
manambitamby ka mbola miditra an-tsahatra ary miantsiantsika mangingina amin’ny alalan’ny
Fanahy Masina, miteny na amin’ny fotoana no tsy amin’ny fotoana. Mibitsibitsika amintsika ho
amin’izay trangan-javatra eo anoloan’ny fiaintantsika izy ka mampahatsiaro fa ireo rehetra rehetra ireo
ange dia mbola hirodana. Anankiray ihany ny tanjona dia ny eo ankavanan’Andriamanitra, hahazo
ilay fiaina manandrakizay. Enga anie mba ho vavolombelona mahatoky ka nahatsiaro fa ny
Fanahin’Andriamanitra no mitarika antsika. Misy manandrakandrana ihany ny Kristianina amin’ity,
misy manandrakandrana misotro zava-mahafaty faty misotro asidra ny sosany; ny “exprès”-noaza
mba hataotao amin’ity tenin’Andriamanitra ity. Ity tsy hahanaovana handrakandrana ity; handray
menarana, aty amintsika moa tsy dia misy menarana loatra fa raha izay no fanapahan-kevitrao ho
raisiko io, aza mitsapatsapa. Izany no mitovy dika amin’ilay oloana tia vavaka ary anjorona-dalana. Ary
ity fomba anankiray hisotro zava-mahafaty: misotroo asidra ianao hahitanao ny fitsipatsipahanao eo,
handramo moa sotroy, may eo ny atinao, vita eo. Ka takiana amadik’izany ilay resaka finoana, ny
herin’ny finoana no tadiavin’Andriamanitra amin’izany fa tsy isika mihisy no hanao fanahiniana
amin’ity, hanao handrakandrana hoe izaho efa mpanompon’Andriamanitra ka tsy hampaninona ahy
ity. Sotroiko, na dia iray barika azy no toaka sotroiko tsy hamono ahy izany; haniko na hanina na
misy inona aza, hanina matsiro ity, na misy asidra ity hohaniko ity rangahy fa tsy hampaninona ahy
ity. Raha zavatra sahala amin’izany no iondrantsika ny tenin’Andriamanitra dia tsy hotanteraka
amintsika izany; fa ny amadik’ity ao dia ilay resaka finoana ary io finoana io ho hijorona ho
vavolombelon’i Jesosy. Fitoriana ny filazantsara mba hampandroso ny olona koa hanantona an’i
Jesosy misimisy kokoa izany. Resa-be io relefa mihanao ny mpanompon’Andriamanitra rehetra,
ahoaana rangahy ity tenin’i Jesosy ity, amin’ilay fanirahana hoe “hisotro zava-mahafaty ianao tsy
hampaninona anareo izany, handray menarana ianao tsy hampaninona anareo izany”.

Ny ao amadik’izao fanirahana ataon’i Jesosy izao dia fiorenana tanteraka; ka na inona
tafiota na inona zavatra mitranga dia ao ilay finoana, finoana izay velomin’ny
fahasoovan’Andriamanitra ka hatobany amintsika amin’ny alalan’ny Fanahy Masina izay efa ao ka
mamafohola ny fo amam-panahintitsika. Isika raha vao miala any an-tonakan-trano androany, fantatra ary
inona fa ny Fanahin’Andriamanitra no maniraka antsika hamonjy an’ity fivoriam-be aty Sahasoa ity,
tarihiny’ny Fanahin’Andriamanitra. Izaho mino fa tsy misy karazana fanahy hafa ka mitarika azy ho
aty Sahasoa hidera an’Andriamanitra sy hitsina an’i Jesosy Tompo eto fa ny Fanahin’Andriamanitra
izay ao amintsika, io ilay miterika antisika ary mampahalala antisika ny marina sy ny tsara rehetra azy
izay dia heverina fa fitoriaya ny filazantsara, fiorenana tanteraka amin’ilay Jesosy ilay mpaniraka,
satria olona nametrahan-kafatra isika, nametrahanana fahatokisana dia tsy hitazana na haneronerona
fotsiny amin’izao fa finoana takiana hisa ilay ao amintsika tsirairey. Ny finoana ny olona vita batisa
dia tsy mba finoana tahaka ny atody manjary lamokany, fa mahafoy ka miteraka ary mampitombo


11. Davidson


Ry Ray Masina ó, manamasina anay amin’ny fahamarinarana fa ny teninao no fahamarinarana Amen.

Ry Havana malala, ho aminareo anie ny fiadanana avy amin’Andriamanitra Raintsika sy Jesosy Kristy Tompo Amen.


Eto ary Jesosy dia maniraka azy ireo manao hoe: “mandehana any amin’izao tontolo izay ianareo ka mitoria ny filazantsara amin’ny olombelona rehetra”. Rehefa niseho Jesosy ka hitan’izy ireo dia tzy nitoetra fotsiny na nihaona fotsiny tamin’ny fihonana fa nanome addy an’ireo olona ireo hiilaza fa “izay mino sy hatao batisa no hovonjena”. Mendehana torio erai’izao tontolo izao izany. Voalazan’i Marka toko faha 15 andininy faha 16 izany, fa ny batisa sy ny fiongoana, izay no mahavonjy. Tsy ny fanaterana akoholahy any amin’ny loharano sy ny fivavahana amin’ny
tendrobohitra 12, tsy ny fanaovana soa be dia be amin’ny mahantra sy ny fanaovana asa be dia be eo amin’ny tany ama-mominina, fa ireny dia kofehy manaram-panjaintra ho an’izay mino. Fa izao kosa no mahavonjy, dia ny fanekena ny tenin’Andriamanitra; fa rehefa manaikey ny tenin’Andriamanitra dia hita eo amin’ny fanekena ny batisa izay voatendry handraisana ny famonjena ao amin’ny fiangonana; ny finoana dia hita amin’ny fandraisanao ny batisa, ary ny batisa no vavolombelona fa mino ianao. Ka ny olona mino sy natoa batisa dia rhirihin’i Jesosy, tsy avelany hipetra-potsiny fa omeny addidy hoe: “mandehana mitory ny filazantsara amin’ny olombeona rehetra”.


“Inty aho, iraho aho’, “ary izaho sy ny ankohonako dia hanompo an’i Jehovah” sy hihaino ny feony izahay.

Ry Havana malala, ny fotoana dia mandalo, mitsahatra eto indray ny tantaran’ny andro niakarana. Saingy izao: tsaroovy fa misy vavolombelona fa vita batisa ianao. Tokony ho fantatry ny maro fa olona mino ianao eo amin’ny andraikitra izay napetraka eo amin’ny fiangonana. Izany anefa, ny fanaovanao ny soa sy ny mety rehetra tsy manambara izany fa ianao no nividy ny lanitra, tsia ! Fa io kosa no manambara fa hoe: ny olona afaka sy voavonjy dia tsy mamihin-tanana fa manolotra ny tenany ho fitaovan’Andriamanitra, manambara ny filazantsara dia Jesosy izay maty sy nitsangana hamonjy izao tontolo izao.

12. Masitsara Raymond


fa isika Kristianina, tsy vitan’ny hoe baiboly maro, fihirana maro no ao amintsika, fa ity izany no fangantarana tSY maintsy hanaraka izay mino: mahasitrama marary, mandoaka demonia, izay izany no fangantarana apetrak’i Jesosy amintsika. Nefa ny mampalahelo dia izao: mbola betsaka ary maro ny Kristiana mpandray ny fanasan’ny Tompo no matoratra devoly; mbola betsaka ny Kristiana mpandray fanasany’ny Tompo no tSY mahasahy mifanandrina amin’ny devoly no amin’ireny miasana ireny aza. Ary izaho aza tena nalalelho fa misy Kristiana izay milaza fa hoe hay miasa ihany ary tena maneho ny fahatahorany izany fanahy ratsy izany, maneho ny fahatahorany izany fanahy maloto izany. Inona ary no antony ivonjena amin’ny Jesosy raha Jesosy no laizinai fa tSY mahavony ny ao, na tSY mahaaro anao amin’ny tanan’ny ratsy fanahy? Dia inona no antony ivavahantsika aty ampiangonana na handehanantsika manontana an’i Jesosy raha toa ka tSY mahavony ny ao Jesosy?


Voninahitra anie ho an’Andriamanitra Ray sy ny Zanaka ary ny Fanahy Masina izay efa azy hatramin’ny taloha indrindra ka ho mandrazikay, Amen.
13. Laha Jean Noël


Ry Ray Masina ô, manamasina anay amin’ny fahamarinana fa ny teninao no fahamarinana. Amen.


endrika isehoan’ny tsy finoantsika an’i Jesosy. Ambara eto anefa fa tsy ho very izay rehetra mino an’i Jesosy fa “hanana fianana mandrakizay”. Izany dia voalaza ao amin’i Jaona toko faha 6 andininy faha 47: “ary io fianana mandrakizay io no harena homen’i Jesosy ny olona izay mino azy”.


Ny zavatra fahatelo hitantsika ato anatin’ity teksta ity koa dia izao: ireo famantarana samihafa hahaihana ireo olona mino an’i Jesosy. Misy famantarana hitantsika ato anatin’ity teksta ity, izay manambara fa hoe mino an’i Jesosy ny olona anankiray. Tsy maintry misy vokatra eo amin’ny
fiainan’izay mino ny tenin’Andriamanitra, izany hoe misy famantarana ny olona mino an’i Jesosy, ka misy sationony na ohatra vitsivitsy izay nambaran’i Jesosy ato amin’ity teksta izay anjarantsika androany ity. Dia izao: “ary izao famantarana izao no hanaraka izay mino: hamoaka demonia amin’ny anarako izy, handray menarana izy ka na dia hisotro zava-mahafaty aza izy dia tsy hampaninona azy izany, hametra-tanana amin’ny marary izy dia ho sitrana ireny”.


Izay no voalaza ato. Indraindray anefa isika Kristianina dia alaim-panahy fa hoe Jesosy efa niteny hoe “handray menarana izy”, ary “na dia hisotro zava-mahafaty aza izy dia tsy hampaninona azy izany”.

Dia mandeha tokoa isika manao ny zavatra mety hahafaty antisika: famongono-tena izany. Tsy izay no zavatra ambaran’i Jesosy eto, fa ilay famantarana fa hoe n’impononona zavatra mihatra amintsika amin’ny fiainantsika amin’ny maha Kristianina antisika, raha mino an’i Jesosy isika, satria ireo no famantarana fa hoe mino mino an’i Jesosy; indraindray koa ny marary dia hoe miandry an’ilay fahamohana ny demonia ihany izany, nefa ambara amintsika fa na marary ianao afaka mamoaka demonia amin’ny anaran’i Jesosy, amin’ny alalan’ny vavaka. Ireny demony ireny anie efa fantapantatra ihany izy hiditra any amin’ny olona, koa rehetra hitaonao izy fa ho tamy dia antsoy Jesosy fa efa fandroahana izy.

Iry rehetra voaraoaka izy dia anisan’ny fiainantsika mamantoka ny ola ni an’ny raha mino an’i Jesosy ianao amin’izay fotoana izy, fa “izay mino sy hatao batisa no hovonjena” hoy ny soratra masina. Tahaka izany koa ny fametrahan-tanana dia anisan’ny mitondra fanasitranana ho an’ny olona marary ireny.


 Voninahitra anie ho an’Andriamanitra Ray Zanaka ary ny Fanahy Masina izay hatramin’ny taloha indrindra ka ho mandrakizay Amen.

15. Rahantanirina Vastyor


Koa mahereza ary tanteraho ny baikon’i Jesosy aminao, dia ny fitoriana ny filazantsara amin’ny olombelona rehetra; ka rehefa tonga izy eny amin’ny rahon’ny lanitra dia hoy izy aminao hoe: “tsara izany, ry mpanompo, tsara sady mahatoky, midira amin’ny fifalian’ny Tomponao”.

Dia voninahitra anie ho an’Andriamanitra Ray, Zanaka sy ny Fanahy Masina izay hatramin’ny taloha indrindra ka ho mandrakizay, Amen.
16. Andrianantoandro Léon Fidèle

Aoka hiaraka hivavaka isika rehetra:


Jesosy Krishy niakatra any an-danitra, ny harena velona sy saro-bidy mandrakizay, ho an’ny mpianatra sy Kristianina vavolombelon’i Jesosy Krishy Tompo, aterako ny fiakaran’ny Tompo velona any an-danitra. Tsapa tokoa, ry Havana, fa amin’izao fiaiaina izao dia manana karazana


Faharoa, tsa miava ny fijoroan’ny mpianatra ho vavolomblona. Mitihiry ny tenin’ny Tompo izay fototry ny fisarahana amin’izao tontolo izao ny mpianatra, mampiavaka azy ireo amin’izao tontolo izao. (Jaona 17-14, 15-18) Izaho efa nifidy anareo avy amin’izao tontolo izao, hoy ny


18. Randrianirina Solofoson Gilbert


Tsy fotoana vahiny amintsika raha ny andro niakarana tahaka izao satria fotoan-dehibe eo amin’ny finoantsika, dia isika izay nizatrika an’i Jesosy tamin’ny fahavelomany ary samy niteny ao anaty, miombim-po amin’ny Apostololy Paoly manao hoe: “Tsy izaho intsony no velona fa i Kristy no velona ato anatiko”. Ity andro niakarana ity dia fotoana ifaliana satria eto ny ihariharian’ny maha mpianatry ny Tompo antsika. Eto no ihariharian’ny fitiavan’Andriamanitra antsika satria eto no fotoana andraisana ny fanirahan’i Jesosy antsika hitory ny filazantsara amin’ny olombelona rehetra. Zava-dehibe izany satria izany no ho famonjena ho an’ny manodidina antsika, izany no ho famonjena ho an’izao tontolo izao. Ka raha nandray izany fanirahanana izany isika izao dia mahatsiary ao fihavan’Andriamanitra antsika.

Raha itodihana ny amin’ny faiann’ny mpianatra, indrindra fa manodidina ny amin’ny fotoana najiyany nandritra ny herinandro masina, dia nahita ny fahoriana isika, ny fahorian’i Jesosy tsy tambo tononina izany, kanefa ny fahorian’ny mpianatra etsy andanin’izany, tsy mba nafenina izany. Ary io efa fantatra’i Jesosy mialoha hoe: lanareo handositra ahy, na dia teo aza ny nivalovalo izay naiaky teo anatrehan’i Jesosy fa tsy bandao azy na dia hahafihany ny azy, tahaka an’i Petera izany; dia indro nandositra an’i Jesosy izy rehefa tonga ny saronina. Ary izany zavatra izany dia neken’i Petera teo anatrehan’i Jesosy izany fa tena fahotana. Tsy vitan’izany ihany, tsy vitan’ny nandosirana an’i Jesosy ihany, fa hitantsika ny tohin’ny tantara, fa rehefa maty Jesosy dia maty tanteraka ihany koa ny finoan’ny mpianatra manoloana izany. Ary rehefa maty ny finoana dia tsy misy izay ahazoana mibidy,...Ary eo no ihariharian’ny tenin’i Jesosy ny amin’ny faharana ny


Lehibe ny fanirahany’ny Tompo antsika, ary raha jerentsika ny tohiny dia hoy Jesosy: “izay mino sy hatao batisa dia hovonjena fa tsy izay tsy mety mino no ho hohelohina”. Izany dia tsy hafo fa fampahatsiarovana ny fahalebiazan’ny asa izay hanirahany’ny Tompo antsika. Fa tena famonjena ho an’ny hafa izany, ny amin’ny fitoriana ny teny izay hanirahany antsika, famonjena ho an’ny hafa izany. Tsapanao ve androany ny fahalebiazan’izany hanirahany’ny Tompo anao? Tsarovy fa lehibe toko izany satria ianao no natao’i Jesosy hitory ny famonjena vitany. Lehibe izany ary amin’ny fa mampitandrina indrindra amin’ny asan’ny Tompo; ianao raha irahina dia tena ho solon’i Jesosy. Raha mitsangana ianao dia aoka ho fantavy ny olona, aoka ho hita taratra eny aminao fa ianao no episitily velona izay mandehandeha hovakian’ny olona. Izany no tena maha lehibe izao fanirahana.
izao ka tena hitandreman'izana nan-kazaha ny arin'ny tenanao ny fitantanany isika sy indrazy, ny mpanjaka ny annaraha ny taona ho an-kalava. "Izay mino sy hatao batisa no hohelohina". Io dia manambana ny fahalebiazana ny arin'ny manampy ny hanavinao i'ny Jesosy antsika. Kanefa izao: Jesosy mampanira dia tsy hendefana anao amin'ny herin'ny tenanao. Amin'izany indindra no nampahafatary ny arin'ny tsy fahamendrahevan'ny mpianatra amin'ny herin'ny tenany. Raha tsy fantatsika fa tsy mendrika isika dia tsy hanana an'i Jesosy izay Tompontsika isika ary tsy hanana an'i Jesosy izay efa mialoha lalana antsika. Fa raha tsy fantatsika izany dia mety handeha irery isika.


Voninahitra anie ho an’Andriamanitrana Ray Zanaka ary ny Fanahy Masina izay azy hatramin’ny taloha indrindra koa no mandrakizay, Amen.
19. Ranaivozava Samuël Jonah


Ry Ray Masina ô, manamasina anay amin’ny fahamarinana fa ny teninao no fahamarinana, Amen.

Ry fiangonana malalala, ho aminareo anie ny fahasoavana sy ny fiadanaana avy amin’Adriamanitra Raintsika sy Jesosy Kristy Tompo. Amen.

andraikitra tamin’izay fanirahana rehetra notanterahan’ny Zanany teto amin’izao tontolo izao dia manambara fa ao anatin’izay nanatanteraka ny fanirahana Izy. Fa tsy naniraka fotsony dia njery izay nirahina any amin’ny nandefasana azy any Izy. Izany foto-kevi-dehibe amin’izany fanirahana izany dia manambara fa an’Andriamanitra ny asa misiona ary tohizan’ny mino azy io, nomeny atao’ny fiangonana, ka hita amin’izany ny maha Andriamanitana tompon’ny asa azy. Raha lazaina ny hoe no mome ny atao’ny fiangonana dia tsy miala Izy fa mbola mitoetra amin’ny maha Izy Azy ihany, fa ampanaoviny ny fiangonana izany asa izany.


Araka izany, ny asa fitoriana ny filazantsara dia tsy mijery “pourcentage” eo amin’ny raharaha izay atao hy ihanan’ny asa fitoriana ny filazantsara. Ny olona mijery “pourcentage” eo amin’ny asa vita dia mora fantaraina: ny olona te hoderaina, ny olona te ho indraindrainana, ny olona matim-boninafihana, ny olona liam-pahefana ka alaim-panahy te hilaza ho mahavita be eo amin’ny asa izao atao. Fa ny mino marina dia mahatsapa mandrakariva, mandra-pikipin’ny masonry fa kely ny asa vitany satria izao tontolo izao no “limite” nametrahan’Andriamanitra hitoriana ny filazantsara. Ny Tompo dia manambara fa ny olombelona rehetra no tanjona hanambarana. Eto hita mimeho koa izany atao hoe fahasoavanan’Andriamanitra, ry Havana. Hita ny fahasoavanan’Andriamanitra satria tsy mizaha tavan’olona Andriamanitra fa mikendry ny olombelona rehetra, mitady, misokajy ny olombelona rehetra, ny ambony, ny ambany, ny mpanana, ny manantra, ny be voninahitra, ny matanjaka, izany no kendren’Andriamanitra hanamarana ny filazantsara. Tsy mizaha tavan’olona Andriamanitra, fahasoavana izany ary isan’izany ianao, na sokajy inona na sokajy inona misy antsika dia isan’izay anirahana’ Andriamanitra.

hametraka asa lehibe ho an’izay tsy mahatoky Azy Andriamanitra, ary izay no toetran’Andriamanitra, tsy hametraka asa lehibe ohatran’izay amin’izay tsy mahatoky Azy Andriamanitra fa matoky anao Andriamanitra. Noho izany dia aoka ho mahatoky azy amin’ny takona na amin’ny miharihary. Izay no fikendren’Andriamanitra, izay no tanjona eo amin’Andriamanitra, matoky anao Izy.


Voninahitra anie ho an’Andriamanitra Ray Zanaka ary ny Fanahy Masina izay hatramin’ny taloha indrindra ka ho mandrakizay, Amen.
22. Mampitohy Elia

Marka toko faha 16, andininy faha 9 ka hatamarin’ny faha 20, mivaky toy izao amin’ny Anaran’i Jesosy:


Ry Ray Masina ô, manamasina anay amin’ny fahamarinana, ny tenonao no fahamarinana.

Amen.

Fanontaniania lehibe mety hipetraka amin’ity tenin’Andriamanitra ity ny hoe: “Nahoana no i Maria no nisehoan’i Jesosy voalohany rehefa nitsangana tamin’ny maty Iz?” Antony tsy latsaky ny telo no azo ambara amin’izany dia ny momba ny tokon’i Maria Magdalena amin’ny maha vehivavy azy, ny momba ny kolontsaina amin’ny ireo sy ny momba ny idray fahafasana amin’ny Andriamanitra.


Amin’ny lafiny ara kolontsaina amin’ny fahamarinana.

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Koa mitsangàna, mijorora, torio fa velona ny Tompontsika ary tonga mpandresy koa isika izany mino.

24. Andriamongolandy

Ny perikopa izay anjarantsika amin’ity tapany faharoa ity dia nalaina avy ao amin’ny filazantsaran’i Marka toko faha 16:9-20.

Ry Ray masina manamasina anay amin’ny fahamarinana fa ny teninao no fahamarinana. Amen.

Andriamanitra velona ilay Jesosy ilay ivavahantsika, nandresy ny fahafatesana izy, ilay fahavalo lehibe indrindra mamahy sy mampangovitry ary mampihorin-koditra izao tontolo iza indrindra.

Ny fandresen’i Kristy ny fahafatesana, io no fototra maha velona sy mampiorina ny finoana Kristianina ary mbola mamelonina sy mampiorina ihany koa ny fiainan’ny Fiangonana hatetra mandraka ankehitriny. Raha alaintsika sary an-tsaina mantsy fa hoe tsy nitsangana tamin’ny maty Jesosy f a nitoetao taom-pasana, dia mazava loatra fa mety ho efa foana 2000 taona latsaka izay ny finoanta. Izany indrindra no ambaran’ny Aposotoly taorian’ny nilatsahan’ny Fanahy Maga sina raha nitory teny izy ireo nilaza hoe: “raha tsy natsangana i Kristy dia efa foana ny finoan’ny olombelona”.

Ny teksta izay ambaro eto amin’ity perikopa ity dia mifanandrifidy amin’izany indrindra, - milaza fanorenom-pinoana - , ary izany no foto-kevi-dehibe misongadina manerana ny lahatsoratra.

Toe-javatra mifanandrifidy amin’izany no hita eto eto ny amin’ireo sokajin’olona telo samihafa izay nisehoan’i Jesosy taorian’ny nitsangany tamin’ny maty. Ny voalaza voalohany fa ny iray nahita ny fitsanganan’i Jesosy eto amin’ny andininy fahara 9 dia Maria Magdalena izay voalaza fa namoahany demonia fito. Raha jerentsika mazava kokoa ao amin’ny ataontsika hoe famaranana fohy izay tena soratra’i Marka, dia ny andininy voalohany ka hatramin’ny fahara 8 amin’ity perikopa ity ka nomen’ny mpandinika ny lohateny hoe ny fasana foana, dia vehevavy telo izy ireo no nandeha tany amin’ny fasaan’i Jesosy ny andro voalohany amin’ny herinandro mba hanosotra ny fatin’ny Jesosy, hanositra zava-manitra azy. Inona no anton’izany? Ny anton’izany dia satria tsy tsy tao amin’izy ireo intsony ny fioana ny amin’ny tenin’ny Jesosy izay anjoa nanao hoe “tsy mantsy hitsangana Izy amin’ny andro fahefan’izao ity”.

Ny teksta izay ambaro eto amin’ity perikopa ity dia mifanandrifidy amin’izany indrindra, - milaza fanorenom-pinoana - , ary izany no foto-kevi-dehibe misongadina manerana ny lahatsoratra.

Toe-javatra mifanandrifidy amin’izany no hita eto eto ny amin’ireo sokajin’olona telo samihafa izay nisehoan’i Jesosy taorian’ny nitsangany tamin’ny maty. Ny voalaza voalohany fa ny iray nahita ny fitsanganan’i Jesosy eto amin’ny andininy fahara 9 dia Maria Magdalena izay voalaza fa namoahany demonia fito. Raha jerentsika mazava kokoa ao amin’ny ataontsika hoe famaranana fohy
finoana rehea lavitra an’i Jesosy na misaraka Aminy isika. Tsy misaraka amin’ny fihaonana amin’i Jesosy na ny fisehoan’i Jesosy eo amintsika ny finoana. Fanomezana avy aminy izany, izay atolony sy velominy amin’ny isehoany sy ihanoany amintsika zanak’olombelona, fa tsy fananana vokatry ny fahalalana ihany izy ireny, ary tsy amin’ny fatoram-pinoana aza ny zava-mahagaga izay misy; porofo’izany, efa nahita izany ireto mpianatra ireto nefa indrisy fa nirodana izany rehea tsy teo aminy intsony Jesosy.


111

Asan’Andriamanitra ny finoa no, finoa dia mahatonga antsika ho olom-boaovao, mahatonga antsika tsy hisalisalala ny amin’ny fananantsika an’Andriamanitra, amin’izany finoa no izany dia misheo indrindry sy voaseho amin’ny alalan’ny finoa. Inona moa izany azy izany? Tsy irsona fa ny fitoriana ny filasalana, io no no tsara voahohany indrindra, fa hoy ny tenin’iAndriamanitra hoe: izao no sitron’ny Raiko dia ny hinaoanaore izay niraahina; kanefa hoy indray i Paoly eto: “ataony ahoana moa ny mino raha tsy misy ny mpitory?” Koa ny mino dia izay efa nanehoan’i Jesosy ny voninahiny. Dia omeny andraikitra izy; voahohany indrindra antsoiny isika ho ao amin’ny famonjena, ary faharoato amin’izany antsoiny ihanayo koa isika ho ao amin’ny fanompoana.


Fahafatesana no tambiny. Ka izao: ny tsy fitoriana ny filasalana dia mamarina anao ko hanameloana anao ho an amin’ny fahaverezana mandrakizay. Eto dia baiko no ilazan’i Jesosy an’izany, mampieritreritra antsika izany, mampitodika antsika izany amin’ny hamahafa antsiaka marina izany mba hivoaka ity rindrina efatra ity ka hitory sy hanambara ny vaovao mahafuly any amin’izay

Rehefa niakatra any an’danitra Izy dia tondroina ho nipetraka ao ankavan’Andriamanitra. Raha mampianatan’ny izany i Lotera dia ambarany fa ny fipetrahan’i Jesosy eo ankavan’an’ny Ray, eo amin’ny hoe tanana ankavan’ny Ray Ray dia tsy milaza fa mipetra-potsiny tsy manao ny aididiny i Kristy mpanjakantsika, tsia! Fa mandray ny fahafetsana fangonana ka avy any amin’ny Ray Ray izay an’ny fahafetsana ao, miro ny asa ho an’ny fiangonana, ary mifona isan’andro isan’andro aza ho an’ny fahafetsana. Dia i Jesosy izay napetraka eo ankavan’an’ny Ray Ray, eo amin’ny Tanana ankavanana izay tanana mhnery, manambana ny fahafetsana, dia tondroina eto fa miara-miasa tamyn’ny fahafetsana ankehitriny; ary eo am-panaovana ny asa izay napetrakAndriamanitra, isika dia mandeha amin’ny fahafetsana amin’ny rafidekotra, tsy manana tahotra ny mba satria manana ity mba azy izy izy dia i Kristy ilay Andriamanitra velona, tsa iza io fa ny Tompo izay efa nitsangana, naharesy ny zava-tsarotra rehetra miamarina ansitika; ary ambaraka eto fa niakatra any an’danitra Izy.

Raha mampianatra izany i Lotera dia ambarany fa ny fipetrahan’i Jesosy eo ankavan’an’ny Ray, eo amin’ny hoe tanana ankavan’ny Ray Ray dia tsy milaza fa mipetra-potsiny tsy manao ny aididiny i Kristy mpanjakantsika, tsia! Fa mandray ny fahafetsana fangonana ka avy any amin’ny Ray Ray izay an’ny fahafetsana ao, miro ny asa ho an’ny fiangonana, ary mifona isan’andro isan’andro aza ho an’ny fahafetsana. Dia i Jesosy izay napetraka eo ankavan’an’ny Ray Ray, eo amin’ny Tanana ankavanana izay tanana mhnery, manambana ny fahafetsana, dia tondroina eto fa miara-miasa tamyn’ny fahafetsana ankehitriny; ary eo am-panaovana ny asa izay napetrakAndriamanitra, isika dia mandeha amin’ny fahafetsana amin’ny rafidekotra, tsy manana tahotra ny mba satria manana ity mba azy izy izy dia i Kristy ilay Andriamanitra velona, tsa iza io fa ny Tompo izay efa nitsangana, naharesy ny zava-tsarotra rehetra miamarina ansitika; ary ambaraka eto fa niakatra any an’danitra Izy.

Koa araka izay voalaza eto, koa farany indrindra dia matoky isika na dia manoloana ny fanenjehana sy ny fahasarotana, ny ady sarotra izay manodidina lalandava ny fiainana. Ny antony dia satria manana fanantenana lehibe isika ary mino sy manantena, matoky. Ka toy ny nampiakarana an’i Jesosy ho any an-danitra no hampiakarana antisika ihany koa amin’ny andro izay handraisany sy hiantsion’i Tompo antisika ho any aminy; ary matoky koa isika ka tsy matalotra satria manana Andriamanitra velona izay nandresy, efa naharesy ny fahafatesana, tsy iza izany fa Jesosy Kristy izay miseho sy mihaona amintsika amin’ny alalan’ny teny, sy ny fanambarana ny vaovao mahafaly izay atolotra ny Tompo ho anao amin’ity perikopa ity.

Voninahitra anie ho Andriamanitra Rey sy Zanaka ary ny Fanahy Masina izay Azy hatramin’ny taloha indrindra ka ho mandrakizay, Amen.
25. Rakotoarijaona F.

Ndeha hiara-mivavaka isika rehetra:

“ Izao ora sy fotoana izao, ry Jesosy Kristy Tomponay, mahatsiaro indrindra ny adidy sy ny hafatra rehetra izay napetrakao eo am-pelatanan’ny fiangonanao, ho tanan’ny olonao izay olom-boafidy, mampahatsiaro ny teny, ny hafatra izay napetrakao taminay, ny hafatra ho an’ny mpanaradia anao rehetra, hitory ny teninao, ny asa sy izay rehetra nampanaoavinao anay ho amin’ity anio ity. 


Ny teny izay hotoriana amintsika amin’ity tapany manaraka ity dia araka izay voasoratra ao amin’i Marka toko faha 16:9-20. Izany indray, ry Havena, no andraisantsika hafatra avy amin’ny Tompo ka atolotra antsika rehetra izao. Ity dia tantara manokana raha dinihana araka izay voalaza izay voasoratra eto. Toa tsy misy ifandraisany na fitohizany amin’izay voasoratra rehetra teo aloha kanefa azo lazaina fa famintinana izay rehetra voasoratra ao amin’ny filazantsara manontolo. Tsy dia iadantsiaka hevitra laolina ny amin’ny tantaran’ny fikarohana samihafa mahatonga ity teny ity ho miavaka ao anatin’ny filazantsara manotolo, tahaka izay hitantsika eto hoe: ao atany fonen-teny no nanoratana azy fa tsy mba natohy niaraka tamin’ny andininy faha 8, fa izay hafatra tian’ny teny ambara amintsika rehetra no holazaina. Ity teny ity, araka ny fikarohana dia teny hanampy ny filazantsara araka ny Marka hatramin’ny toko 1 ka hatramin’ny toko faha 16 andininy faha 8; misy mpanoratra milaza fa isan’ny teksta anankiray tao anatin’ny baiboly ity teny ity izay hita taty amin’ny tao 140 taorian’i Jesosy Kristy teo ho eo, ary i Irené aza dia milaza fa tamin’ny taona 180 taorian’ny Jesosy Kristy no nisehoan’izany. Raha ampitaahaina tsotra amin’ny voalaza eo aloha izay ambara amin’ity teny ity; teo aloha dia ny tenin’ilay zatoto lahy tamin’ireo vehibavy namangy tany amin’ny fasana tamin’ny andro vao maraina no nisongadina, fa eto kosa dia hita fa efa miditra amin’ny resaka tantaran’ny fiangonana ny teksta; izany hoe mazava fa efa amin’ny vanim-potoana izay iainan’ny fiangonana no nanoratana izao teny izao.

Ny zavatra lehibe voalohany izay ambara amin’ity teny ity dia ao ny.fitsanganan’i Jesosy Kristy tamin’ny maty araka izay hitantsika ao amin’ny andininy faha 9. Rehefa nitsanganana Jesosy dia nisamihafa ny olona vitsivitsy. Maria Magdalena no voalohany voalaza eto, ary koa Maria anankiray, ary taorian’izany dia tamin’ireo roalahy ary farany dia tonya tamin’ireo Apositoly. Izany hoe misy ambaratongany ny fomba nisehoan’i Jesosy tamin’ny mpianatra; izany ambaratonga izany tsy midika akory fa hoe nisy fahasamihafa izany amin’izay ireo fa efa planina nasehon’Andrianamitira tamin’ny fanambaran-renany tamin’ny alalan’i Jesosy Kristy izany. Fa tsy mba nanambara an’i Jesosy tamin’ny hery sy amin’boninahitra lehibe Izy fa tamin’ny fanenret-tena sy tamin’ny fahatsorana, hatramin’ny niterahana azy tany an-tron-omby sy ny nanaoavany ny asany azy ny nananfety tena ho faty teo ambonin’ny hazo fijaliana. Hitantsika eto fa rehefa niseho tamin’ireo vavolombelona samihafa ny amin’ny nitsanganan’i Jesosy tamin’ny maty izany tantara izany dia tonya amin’ny tapany manaraka, ny tapany faharoa milaza ny asan’ireo Apositoly izay fototra niorenan’ny fiangonana araka amin’ny olona hazo amin’ny fiangonana.

misedra ny fahavalo rehetra tahaaka ny menarana sy ny zava-mahafaty, hatramin’ny aretina satria ny petra-tanana dia mitondra amin’ny fanasitranaana. Atao hoe sarotra ny fanambarana izany, ny fanantanteraha izany hafatra aperatra amin’ny fiangonana izany satria maro ny fahavalo, maro tso tambo isaina ny fahasarotana mipetraka eo amin’ny vontolo misy entsika, ny faiamin-piangonana, ny faiainam-pirenena, ny faiainam-pianankaviana, ny faiainam-piarahamonina. Mipetraka tahaaka ny zanak’ondry eo afsofoan’ny ambodina ny mino amin’ny fihatrehana izany rehetra izany ary mipetraka tahaaka izany koa ny fiangonana. Famanantarana izay manaraka ny mpanitr’i Jesosy eto ny andininy faha 17 sy faha 18, dia zavatra hita fa tsy vaovao amin’ny filazantsara na any amin’ireo boky 27 izay voasoratra hoe filazantsara na testamenta vaovao amin’ny boky bohy ananantsika ankehitriny, fa zavatra efa fomba, miseho amin’ny fomba samihafa amin’ny toerana sasany ihany koa, ohatra amin’izany ny 1 Korontiana toko faha 14, ao amin’ny Asan’ny Apostoly toko faha 2, na ny Asan’ny Apostoly toko faha 10, na ny 1 Korontiana toko faha 12, ny Jakoba toko faha 5:14 sy ny hafa rehetra ihany koa. Efa samy ahitana an’ireo mariky ny famanantarana ny mpanitr’i Jesosy avokoao ireo. Kanefa izay tian’i Marka manokana tsindriana manokana amin’ity, izay dia ny mpanoratra tsindriana manokana eto: fampahatsiahivana na fanamafisana izay rehetra efa voalaza any amin’ny toerana hafa ihany koa satria asa lehibe miandry ny fiangonana.

Fa ny tapeny farany indrindra amin’izao teny izao no ahitantsika fa nisy ny tso-drano izay napetraky ny Tompo ho amin’ireo mpanatanteraka ny asa ireto fa ny Tompo mihitsy no miara-miara amin’ny fanantanteraha izany asa rehetra izay napetrany izany. Ny fiaaraha-miara amin’ny Tompo dia zavatra tsy vaovao koa satria ny Apostoly Paoly no efa niteny izany hoe: “mpiara-miara amin’Andriananitra izahay”. Tsy ny amin’ny asan’ny famonjena tsy akory no tiany ambaro amin’izany fa ny fangona mampanirana, mampanao ny asa ary izy koa no manome ny heri hany aharohana ny asa, fa tsy ianao no tompon’ny asa izay ataoaao. Amin’izany, izay tiany hambara koa dia ny hoe: ny maha mpiara-miara amin’Andriananitra dia miainga mandrakariva amin’ny fiantsoana an’Andriananitra; isarohana indrindra izany ny fandrosoa manoloana ny zavatra izay misy, tompon’ andraikitra ao amin’ny fiangonana isika, manana anjara fanompoana manokana noho ny fandohana isika. Miainga amin’ny fiantsoan’ny Tompo izany rehetra izany ka Izy no manendry ny fanantanteraha izany raharaha izany. Fa rehetra ny Tompo no miantso dia momba sy mitahy Izy. Fantantsika mpiandry ao amin’ny fiangonana mazava loatra moa ny teny izay ambary eto fa anisan’ny teny fenorena amin’ny asa ny fampaherezana izay fanao ny Marka toko faha 16:15-20, kanefa izy eto dia ambary sy hazavaina miaraka hatrety amin’ny andininy faha 9 ka hatramin’ny andininy faha 20.

Tokony hotsarondotsika mandrakariva izany fa Jesosy misohe amin’ny fiafantsika no mariky ny fiantsoana antsika voahalaniny indrindra. Fa na tsy voakilasy eto ny ambary-tonga izay misy entsika hoe fa rehetra niseho tamin’i Maria Magdalena Jesosy, niseho tamin’i Maria hafa koa ary niseho tamina olona roalahy hafa tany an-tsaha, niseho tamin’ny Apostoly fa tsy voasoratra eto ny hoe misheo amin’ny olom-boafidy dia hany dia hany ny hoe tsy anisan’ny olom-boaantso na olom-boafidy aho satra s抟 ny nisehoan’ny Jesosy misyvanina. Samy manana ny anjara-toerany manandrify azy ny tsirairay ary hajaina, tandrovana fahatrina izay fahasoaviana manokana efa napetraka ho anjan’ny tsirairay azy efa no rofiana tsy izay rehetra rehetra hafa ny fiantsoana ary hatramin’ny fanaonana ho an’ireo olona ireo ny nisehoan’ny Jesosy misyvanina taminy, satria mbola tsy mampakarina tany an-danitra Izy. Koa isika tsy hiady ho tahaka azy.

Fa fantatsika rehetra fa rehetra lasa Jesosy, nampidinina ny Fanahy Masina. Tamin’ny alalan’ny Fanahy Masina indray isika no mandray ny teny fanambarana, amin’ny alalan’ny Fanahy Masina no mandray ny hafatra rehetra avy amin’ny Tompo toy ny fiantsoana sy ny fanarhahana hanao ny asa izay nampanaovin’ny Tompo rehetra. Koa amin’izany isika dia hahatsiaro ny fahaveloman’ny fiantsoana ao anatinitsika mandrakariva, dia ny fiantsoana izay mifototra amin’ny asa izay nampanaovina eto, dia tsy miavao ihany koa fa miainga amin’ny fitoriana ny filazantsara. Amin’ny fandaminam-piangonantsika moa dia ny batisa dia ny olom-boahosotra ihany no manao azy, fa ny
hafa rehetra kosa dia ataon’ny olo-mino rehetra. Tsy famantarana ihany izy eto fa tena asa tanterahina; raha misy demonia dia avoaka amin’ny anaran’i Jesosy, dia iny no manamporofo, fa izay moa no famantarana atoaantsika hoe porofo, manamarina fa Jesosy tokoa no miasa satria Izy no efa nitsangana tamin’ny maty ka nandresy ny fahavalo rehetra.


Koa enga anie ary isika mba tso hy anisan’izay mahazo ny teny voambaran’ny andininy faha 14 eto : mahazo tsiny noho ny tso finoana sy ny hamafin’ny fo noho ny tso finoana, fa enga anie isika rehetra mba handray sy hino, handray ny hafa avy amin’ny Tompo tokoa. Fa raha mandray izany isika dia hy mpanatantera ny asa izay napetraky ny Tompo ho amintsika rehetra ary ny Tompo no miara-misana amintsika, ary tso hipetra kosa isika fa hanao tahaka an’i Maria handeha hilaza amin’ny hafa rehetra izay mbola malahelo, misaona sy mitomany, ny amin’ny fahaveloman’i Jesosy sy ny amin’ny nahitana Azy; ka na dia mahita ny tso finoan’ny hafa aza, ny tso fandrainsan’ny olona ny fanambaranana dia tso hy kivy. Fa fantantsika fa anjaran’ny Tompo no mitsara ny olona tsiraivay avy fa isika niraheina hamafy, hafa ny mpamafy, hafa ny mpinjinja. Koa ny Fanahin’ny Tompo izay miara-misana amintsika no habatanteraha izany rehetra izany ho fanambarana ny vaovao mahafaly sy ireto asa rehetra nampanaovin’ny Tompo ireto.

Ho Azy anie ny voninahitra izay efa Azy hatramin’ny taloha indrindra ka haharitra mandrakizay, Amen.
Ny teksta anjarantsika dia ao amin’i Marka toko faha 16, manomboka amin’ny andininy faha 9 ka hatramin’ny faha 20, mivaky toy izao amin’ny Anaran’i Jesosy:


Ry Ray Masina ô, manamasina anay amin’ny fahamarinana, ny Teninao no fahamarinana. Amen.


misiona voalohany, ary izany no mahatonga antsika fiangonana hanao zava-dehibe ny famoahana demonia mba hahatonga ny olona handray ny filazantsara mba hahatonga azy hahazo ny fiainana mandrakizay. Ao anatin’izany koa ny aretina maro samihafa izay mahatonga ny olona tsy hahatsapa ny hamamin’ny famonjena, ka noho izany dia anisan’ny asan’ny fiangonana ihany koa ny fansitranana amin’ny alalan’ny vavaka izay hahazoan’ny olona tanteraka ny famonjen’i Kristy. Enga anie mba samy hahavita ny andraikitra amin’izany fitoriana ny filazantsara izany ny fiangonana tsirairay.

Voninahitra anie ho an’Andriamanitra Ray Zanaka ary ny Fanahy Masina izay Azy hatramin’ny taloha indrindra ka ho mandrakizay, Amen.
Ny perikopa izay voatendry hotoriana dia ny Marka toko faha 16:9-20, mivaky toy izao amin’ny Anaran’i Jesosy.


Ry Ray Masina ô, manamasina anay amin’ny fahamarinana fa ny teninao no fahamarinana. Amen!

Ity perikopa izay anjarantsika ity dia voalahatra indrindra hotoriana amin’ny andro niakarana, kanefa manomboka amin’ny andininy faha 14 hatramin’ny 20 ihany raha ny perikopantsika FLM no jerena, ary andininy faha 9 ka hatramin’ny faha 13 dia tsy ao anatin’izany; fanamihana ihany izany fa ny anjarantsika ito dia miantoboka amin’ny andininy faha 9 no fahagana amin’ny andininy faha 20. Raha mahamarika isika dia hita tokoa ato amin’ny baibliotsika fa misy natoa ny mpanoratra no anatin’ny “crochets”, na farango sosona izany, ity andininy faha 9 sy faha 20 ity, izay manambara indrindra fa tsy azo antoka mazava tsara ny fisian’ireo andininy ireo fa mampisalasa. Kanefa tsy hiditra lalina amin’izany isika fa ndeha hojerenantsika ny perikopa izay anjarantsika, izay manomboka amin’ny andininy faha 9 no fahagana amin’ny andininy faha 20.

Eto amin’ny andininy faha 9 ka hatramin’ny faha 13 dia maneho amintsika ny sary izay nitsanganan’i Jesosy tamin’ny maty sy ny nisehoany voalohany indrindra tamin’ny Maria Magdalena, ary ny natoa’i Maria taorian’izany fahitany an’i Jesosy izay dia ny nanambary tamin’ny namany izany fahagaganina lehibe izany. Araka ny hita amin’ny filazantsara “synoptique” iray manontolo dia hita fa tsy niseho avy hatrany amin’ny alalan’ireo mipianatra 11 lahy Jesosy, fa voalaza mazava tsara amin’ny andininy faha 9 amin’ny perikopa izay anjarantsika eko, fa niseho voalohany tamin’ny Maria Magdalena Izy. Iza moa ity Maria Magdalena ity? Ary inona no mety nahatonga azy ho isan’izay voalohany indrindra nisehoan’i Jesosy tamin’ny fitsanganan’ny tamin’ny maty? Raha jerentsika ny andininy faha 9 amin’ireo amin’ny faha 9 amin’ny perikopantsika izao sy ny Lioka toko faha 8 andininy faha 2 dia izy ilay vohiyavy izany nanana demonia 7 ary nositrana’i Jesosy tamin’izany. Hita koa amin’ny filazantsara hafa toy ny Lioka toko faha 8 andininy faha 3 fa vokatra’izany fanaitsraninana lehibe izay natoa’i Jesosy taminy izany dia nahafoy tokoa izy ny fananany hanompoany an’i Jesosy nandritra ny fotoana izay nanatanterahan’i Jesosy ny fitiavana ny filazantsara. Raha mijery koa isika ny amin’ny tantara izay amin’ny fijalian’i Jesosy, nanomboka tamin’ny nanomboana azy teo amin’ny hazo fijaliana hatramin’ny nametrahana azy tao am-pasana, dia hita fa anisan’izay nitsinjo lavitra teny ho eny, nanjohy mandrakariva an’i Jesosy izy nanomboka teo amin’ny nanomboana azy teo amin’ny hazo fijaliana ary hatramin’ny nametrahana azy tao am-pasana. Hitantsika izany ao amin’ny Matio.


nisy aza ny vavolombelona izay nataon’ireto mpianatra maro sy ny olona maromaro izay efa nahita tokoa an’i Jesosy, dia nilaza fa tsy hina raha tsy atao eo amin’ny lanivohany izay nohoomboana ny tanany. Izany asa fitoriana vaovao mahafaly izany no nanirahan’i Jesosy ny mpianany mialoha ny hiakarany any an-danitra.


Voninahitra ho an’Andriamanitra Ray sy Zanaka ary Fanahy Masina, Amen!
28. Rabaritsotra

Ry fiangonana malala, ho aminareo rehetra anie ny fahasoavana sy ny fiadanana avy amin’Andriamanitra Rainitsika sy Jesosy Kristy.

Isan’ny zavatra mahagaga izay mahagaga ahy tokoa, ry Kristianina Havana, ny tsy fikilasiantsika ity andro niakarana izay ankalahazantsika anio ity ho isan’ny fety lehibe ato amin’ny fiangonana Kristiana. Nefa anie fa dia hita sy tsapa izao fa fanalahidin’ny izoran’ny tantaran’ny fiangonana hoe amin’ny fandraisany sy ny fahatongavany ilay Mpananatra haфа, dia ny Fanay Masina. Midika izany fa fiafaran’ny asan’ny Jesosy teo an-tany na fanombohany ny asany an any an-danitra ny hevitrity ny andro niakarana, fa fampitohizana indrindra ny minisiterany sy ny minisiteran’ny fiangonana, satria ilay Jesosy nampiakarina hoe any an-danitra sy nipetraka eo ankavanana’Andriamanitra dia mbola miara-miasa amin’ny fiangonana amin’ny alalan’ny fanamamarinana ny teny, amin’ny famantarana izay ampombainy azy, araka izao perikopa izay anjantserika izao. Eto amin’ity tenin’Andriamanitra izay voalahatra hutoriana androany ity ary dia tsapa tokoa fa tsy zavatra mera tamin’ny fiangonana ny nahanatongavany tamin’izao toerana misy azy ankehiritriny izao, dia ny fahafahana manaihy ny filazantsara ho fanambaharana ny tenin’Andriamanitra tokoa, dia ilay Andriamanitra miasa manafaka ny olona izay voafatotory ny zavatra maro simihafa. Hita izany eto amin’ity teny anjantserika eto ity. Voafatotry ny fahadisoam-panantenana lalina ireo mpomba an’ny Jesosy tamin’ity fotoana ity ka tsy nety nanaiky ny filazantsara izay notoritian’ny Maria Magdalena, dia ny fahaveloman’ny Tomato, ny fandreseny ny fasana, ny fanitsaksitahany ny lohan’ilay menarana elana. Nefa anie, ry Havana, ireto dia olona efa niaraka niriaraka niaraka tamin’i Jesosy nandrify na fotoana lava, ka nahalalal tsara ny heri sy fahefa amin’izay nananany.


Na izany anefa dia mbola nanao famantarana izay nampombainy ireo izay mino azy ihany Jesosy, dia ireo izay nanaiky ny filazantsara sy natao batisa. Tsy hoe ireto voanisa ireto ihany no famatarana ny mino, na koa hoe manana ireo vao azo lazaina fa mino! Tsia! Fa “zarazaraina ho simihafa ny fanomezam-pahasovaana”, hoy i Paoly Apostoly, ka tsy ho ari voanisa ao avokoia izy rehetra. Saingy notanisainy ireo mba haneho fa olona nafahan’i Jesosy tamin’ny fatorana maro simihafa ny mino, ka nomena fahefana mampitolagaga izao tontolo izao eo amin’ny asa izay nanirahana azy. Tantara maro ao amin’ny soratra masina no manecho amintsoa ny famoahana.


Voninahitra anie ho an’Andriamanitra irery ihany izay azy hatramin’ny taloha indrindra ka ho mandrakizay, Amen.
Appendix 5: Easter Sermons

2. Loubiens Fidimanentena Claudias


anatin’ny trano ary tsy tamamelo ny rahalahana rehetra, na ny olombelona, na ny biby ba izay tsy misy an’io rà io ny varavarany, dia maty daholo ny voahafahamonjiana na ny rahalahana, na ny biby ba ny olombelona. Ny rán’ny zanak’ondry miteraka famelan-keloka, manome famindram-po ho an’izay mandray azy.

Ry havana malala, nobakon’Andriamanitra ho tsarovana isan-taona isan-taona io Paska io ary misanandryfiry amin’izany indrindra, amin’io fotoa anka...


amin’i Jesosy, porofon’izany isika, hoy izaho teo tamin’ny alina, ny ankizy no maro an’isa indrindra tamin’ireo izay namangy tonkan-trano ka nilaza hoe “velona Jesosy”. Ny sekoly alahady no be an’isa, tao ny tanora vitsy fotsiny, ny olon- dehibe tsy nisy, midika izany fa ny fitsanganan’i Kristy dia mitondra famonjena ho an’ny rehetra manoloana ny fanavakavahana misy.


Koa enga anie isika rehetra izay mandray izao fahasambarana mandre izao tenin’Andriamanitra amin’ny Paska voalohany alahady maraina izao mba hahafantatra mba tsy ho very fanantenana intsony, tsy hisalasala intsony ary tsy ho voahozongozon’ny fampianarana hafa; fa izao: tsy velona sy tsy nitsangana amin’ny andro Sabata izay hireharehan’ny fiangonana sasany Jesosy fa nandresy ny fahafatesana sy nitsangana tamin’ny andro alahady maraina, ka na manao ahoana na manao ahoana, velona amin’ity alahady maraina ity Jesosy, androm-pamonjena, androm-pahasoavana, andro natao hiderana sy hanomezam-boninahitra an’Andriamanitra izany. Noho izany, na iza na iza manozongozona, na iza manaratsy dia izao: “tano mafy izay anananao mba tsy hisy haka ny satro-boninahitrao“. “Velona Jesosy!”
Voninahitra anie ho an’Andriamanitra ireny ihany, izay efa azy hatramin’ny taloha indrindra ka ho azy mandrakizay mandrakizay. Amen.
3. Georges


Ny tenin’Andriamanitra izay horesentsiska, ry Havana, dia ao amin’ny Marka toko faha 16, andininy 1 ka hatramin’ny faha 7, Marka toko faha 16 andininy 1 hatramin’ny faha 7, vakiana amin’ny anaran’i Jesosy izany: “Ary refe ha afaka ny andro Sabata, dia lasa nividy zava-manitira Maria Magdalena sy Salome ary Maria, renin’i Jakoba, mba hande ha nanosatra ny fatin’i Jesosy. Ary nony marainina koa tamin’ny voalahana’andro amin’ny herinandro, refe ha niposaka ny masoandro, dia nankany amin’ny fasana izy ireo. A ary niresaka hoe izy: Iza no re ho hanakodia ny vato ho afaka amin’ny varavaram-pasana hisolo ansika? Fa nony niraka izy, dia, indro, hitany fa efa voakodia niala ny vato; fa lehibe dia lehibe ny vato. Ary raha nidi tao anatin’ny fasana izy, dia nahita zato voankara nipetraka teo amin’ny ankavananina niakianjaka anan i fotsy, dia talanjona izy. Fa hoy zatovo talanjona: Aza talanjona; mitady an’i Jesosy avy any Nazaret. Izay nohoomboana tamin’ny hazo fijaliana, ianareo; efa nitsangana Izzy; tsy ato Izzy; jereo fa teo no namerahany Azy. Fa mandehana, laza amin’ny mphianany sy Petera fa mialoha anareo ho any Gallízi Izzy; any no hahitamarea Azy, araka izay nolazainy taminareo."

Ray masina ô, manamasina anay amin’ny fahamarinana fa ny teninia no fahamarinana Amen. Ry fiangonona malala, ho aminareo anie ny fahasoavana sy ny fiadanana avy amin’Andriamanitra Ray sy Jesosy Kristy Tompo.


Randriatsarafara Jean Gaston


Ny andro Paska no mahavory lanona antsika mianakavy eto, azy azo lazaina fa anisan’ny fety lehibe fara-tampony eo amin’ny atao hoe fety Kristianina. Izany no andro Paska, azy raha atao hoe ny fara-tampony sy ny lehibe indrindra amin’ny andro Kristianina no hatrehinina dia rariny raha mifampiharahaba isika rehetra manao hoe “arahabaina, ry Havana, tratra ity fotoan-dehibe ity, arahaba fa mananrika ny androm-pahasoavana”. Ny andro izay irina dia ny fahatatrana ny andro lehibe tahak’izany ary hahazoana midera an’Andriamanitra amin’ny Laharan-kira faha 20. Ny hira faha 20 no atontsika eo am-pitsangananana ho fiderana sy fisaoranana an’Andriamanitra ary dia hovakivana nanaraka izany ny tenin’Andriamanitra izay voalohatra ho anjarantsika amin’ny andro ity, ao amin’ny filazantsara araka ny Marka, Marka toka faha 16 andininy voalohany ka hatramin’ny faha 7. Ary rehafa hitantsika izany dia hiara-hitsangana isika hanome voninahitrao ny Andriamanitra amin’ny hira faha 20 sy amin’ny fmakiana ny tenin’ny rehetra izay.


Ry Ray masina ô, manamasina anay amin’ny fahamarinana fa ny teninao no fahamarinana. Amen.

Ry fiangonana malala, ho aminareo anie ny fahasoavana sy fiadanana azy amin’Andriamanitra Ray sy Jesosy Kristy Tompo.

Fetin’ny Paska! Izany no ifanatreheitsika mianakavy eto. Tsy misy izay tsy mahalala izany isika rehetra izao, anefà mahalala fa amin’ny fomba ivelany ihanay. Amin’ny mahà fety iombonana azay, dia izany matetika no hifaliana ary indrindra isika eto Vakinakaratra dia malaza satria malaza ho toeram-pitsangatsanganana Antsirabe ka dia fantatry ny maro izany atao hoe

133


136

Ny Paska izay hatrehantsika dia aoka tsy ho “Paska sandoka” izay hasehon’ny maro no izany no hihazakazahantsika, fa fiadiavana an’i Jesosy sy faneriana te-hihaona aminy, ary koa fandraisana andraikitra tahaka izay napetraka tamin’ireto veihivavy ireto. Atoy anisan’ny zava-dehibe indrindra izay raketin’ny Paska ny hoe aoka hitoetra ao am-ponotsika ny tenin’Andriamanitra. Fa ny tsy fitadidiavan’i Adama sy Eva ny tenin’Andriamanitra no nanesorana azy hiala tao amin’ny sahan’ny Edena, fa ny nanandratana an’i Maria kosa, ka niderana azy rehetra tonga ny anjely niteny taminy, dia hovy ny soratra masina hoe: “Ary i Maria dia nitadidy izany reny rehetra izany tao am-pony”. Ny irina: isika mpanao Paska androany koa dia hitahiry sy hitadidy ny tenin’Andriamanitra ka handeha hilaza tahaka ny nataon’ireto veihivavy ireto.

Dia voninahitra anie ho an’Andriamanitra Ray sy Zanaka izay efa azy hatramin’ny taloha indrindra ka mbola ho mandrakizay.


Ho aminareo rehetra anie ny fahasaovani’i Jesosy Kristy Tompo sy ny fitiavan’Andriamanitra Ray ary ny fampiraisana avy amin’ny Fanahy Masina. Amen
6. Randrianaivo Jean Chrysotom

Ny filazantsara anjarantsika dia ao amin’ny Marka toko faha 16, andininy voaholy hany kafa hatramin’ny andininy faha 7. Hovakiantsiska amin’ny Anaran’i Jesosy Kristy Tompo izany:
“Ary rehefa afaika ny andro Sabata, dia lasa nividy zava-manitra Maria Magdalena sy Salome ary Maria, renin’Iakoba, mba handeha hanosotra ny fatin’i Jesosy. Ary nony maraina koa tamin’ny voalohan’andro amin’ny herinandro, rehefa nipsosa ny masoandro, dia nankany amin’ny fasana izy ireo. Ary niresaka hoe izy: Iza re no hanakodia ny vato ho afaka amin’ny varavaram-pasana hisolo antsika? Fa nony nitraka izy, dia, indro, hitany fa efa voakodia niala ny vato; fa lehibe dia lehibe ny vato. Ary raha niditra tao anatin’ny fasana izy, dia nahita zatovo anankiray niperatra teo amin’ny ankavanana niakanjo akanjo foetsy, dia talanjona izy. Fa hoi ilay zatovo taminy: Aza talanjona; mitady an’i Jesosy avy any Nazaretta, Izay nohomboma tamin’ny hazo fijaliana, ianareo; efa nitsangana Izy; tsy ato Izy; jereo fa teo no nametrahany Azy. Fa mandehana, lazao amin’ny mpianany sy Petera fa mialoha anareo ho any Galilia Izy; any no hahitanareo Azy, araka izay nolazainy taminareo.”

Ray masina ô manamasina anay amin’ny fahamaranina fa ny teninao no fahamarinana. Amen.


8. Dada Rajosoa


Ry Ray masina ô, manamasina anay amin’ny fahamarinana fa ny teninao no fahamarianana. Amen.

Ry fiangonana malala, ho aminareo anie ny fahasoavana sy ny fiadanana avy amin’Andriamanitra Ray sy Jesosy Kristy Tompo.


142


Octobre 1894, izay niteny taminy hoe: “ario avokoa ireo odinao sy ny sikidinao rehetra ireo”. Ary rehetra nino an’izay izy dia nibebaka ka nanary ny samp; ary dia Andriamanitana no hivavahany. Tsy maintsy madio ny trano ampiantaranoana an'i Jesosy isan’andro, ary tsy maintsy hatoa be hanina hahazoana mampandroso an'i Jesosy, dia ireo vahiny izay mamangy isan’andro. Ny zavatra rehetra izay atao tsy an'an'ireo sy anatan’ireo sy ny sikidinana sy ireo: “Mamohatra ny olona rehetra ny fahafatesana”. Amin'ny olona rehetra ny fahafatesana izay vavahatao be ny hahihinana no hafanana an'i Jesosy sy ny fahafatesana amin'ny fahafatesana satria. Amin'ny olona rehetra dia pulla mafi amin'ny zavatra rehetra, ary dia fiainam-paòvao dia mampy hahitra afaka ny hahasokana izany. Amin'ny olona rehetra dia ny olona rehetra, ary dia fiainam-paòvao dia mampy hahitra afaka ny hahasokana izany.
9. Jacquis

Hovakiantsika ny filazantsara masina, voatendr'ny hotoriana amin'ity Paska voalohany ity. Izany dia hitantsika ao amin'ny filazantsara araka ny Marka 16, 1-7. Dia toy izao ny fivakin'izany amin'ny anaran'ny Jesosy Kristy Tompo: “Ary rehetra afaka ny andro Sabata, dia lasa nividy zava-manitra Maria Magdalena sy Salome ary Maria, renin'i Jakoba, mba handeha hanosotra ny fatin'i Jesosy. Ary nony maraina koa tamin'ny voalohany an-dro amin'ny herinandro, rehetra niposaka ny masoandro, dia nankany amin'ny fasana izy izy. Aria niresaka hoe izy: Iza re no hanakodia ny vato ho afaka amin'ny varavaram-pasana hisolo antsika? Fa nony nitraka izy, dia, indro, hitany fa efa voakodia niala ny vato; fa lehibe dia lehibe ny vato. Ary raha nidotra tao anatin'ny fasana izy, dia nahita zatovo anankiray nipetra ho tamin'ny amin'ny ankavanana niakanjo akanjo fotsy, dia talanjo ny. Arix hoy ilay zatovo taminy: Aza talanjo; mitady an'i Jesosy avy any Nazaretana, Izay nohomboana tamin'ny hazo fijaliana, ianareo; efa nitsangana Izy; tsy ato Izy; jerefa teo no nometrahan'ny Azy. Fa mandehana, laza amin'ny mpianany sy Petera fa mialoha anareo ho any Galilia Izy; any no hahitanareo Azy, araka izay nolazainy taminareo.”

Ry Ray Masina ô, manamasina any amin'ny fahamarinana fa ny teninao no fahamarinana. Amen.

Ry fiangonana malala, ho aminareo anie ny fahasoavana sy ny fiadanana avy amin'Andriamanitry sy Jesosy Kristy Tompo. Amen.


amin’ity filazantsaran’ny Paska ity izany ka mahatonga antsika hanam-pitiavana an’i Kristy fa nadatsaka ny râny ho anao sy ho ahy Izy.

momba antsika mandrakariva dia ho maro ny olona mpanara-dia an’i Kristy, ho maro ny olona mino fa ny fitsanganan’i Jeosy tamin’ny maty no fanomezana fiainana ho an’izao tontolo izao.

10. Rakotonomenjahary Danielson

Aoka hiara-mivavaka isika rehetra:


150


11. Davidson


Ny tenin’Andriamanitra izay hovakiana amintsika dia ao amin’ny Marka toko faha 16 andininy voalohany ka hatramin’ny faha 7, toy izao no fivakin’ny teny amin’ny Anaran’i Jesosy Kristy Tompo: “Ary reheta afaka ny andro Sabata, dia lasa nividy zava-manitra Maria Magdalena sy Salome ary Maria, renin’i Jakoba, mba handeha hanosotra ny fatin’i Jesosy. Ary nyony maraina koa tamin’ny voalohan’andro amin’ny herinandro, reheta niposaka ny masoandro, dia nankany amin’ny fasana izy ireo. Ary niresaka hoe izy: Iza re no hanakodia ny vato ho afaka amin’ny varavaram-pasana hisiso antsika? Fa nony nitraka izy, dia, indro, hitany fa efa voakodia niala ny vato; fa lehibe dia lehibe ny vato. Aro raha nitraka tao anatin’ny fasana izy, dia nahita zatovo manadinkany nipetraaka teo amin’ny ankavanana niakanko akankjo fotsy, dia talanjona izy. Fa hou ilay zatovo taminy: Aza talanjona; mitady an’i Jesosy avy any Nazareta, Izay nohobonona tamin’ny hazo fijaliana, ianareo; efa nitsangana Izy; tsy afo Izy; jereo fa teo no nametrahanany Azy. Fa
mandehana, lazao amin'ny mpianany sy Petera fa mialoha anareo ho any Galilia Izy; any no hahitanareo Azy, araka izay nolazainy taminareo.”


Ry fiangonana malala, ho aminareo anie ny fahasoavana sy ny fiadanana avy amin’Andriamanitra Raintsika sy Jesosy Kristy Tompo. Amen.

Araka ny hitantsika eo amin’ny andininy faha telo amin’ity tantara izay novakiantsika ity dia mitady mpisolo ny olona amin’ny zava-tsarotra manahirana azy eto amin’izao fainana izao. Mitady mpisolo ny olona amin’ny zava-tsarotra manahirana azy. Hiverenantsika kely ny fitaritan-teny tery aloha, ry Havana, fa ny Paska dia andro malaza hatrany an-danitra ka hatraty an-pany.


12. Masitsara Raymond

Hiarahantsika mamaky ny tenin’Andriamanitra izay voasoratra ao amin’ny filazantsara masina nosoratan’i Marka toko faha 16, Marka 16 vakiana ao amin’ny andininy voahohan'ny mijonona amin’ny andininy faha 7, hovakiana amin’ny Anaran’i Jesosy manao hoe: “Ary rehefa afaka ny andro Sabata, dia lasa nividy zava-manitra Maria Magdalena sy Salome ary Maria, renin’i Jakoba, mba hanedeha hanosotra ny fatin’i Jesosy. Ary nony maraina koa tamin’ny voalahon'andro amin’ny herinandro, rehefa niposaka ny masoandro, dia nankany amin’ny fasana izy ireo. Ary niresaka hoe izy: Iza re no hanakodia ny vato ho afaka amin’ny varavaram-pasana hisolo antsika? Fa nony nitraka izy, dia, indro, hitany fa efa voakodia niala ny vato; fa lehibe dia lehibe ny vato. Ary raha niditra tao anatin’ny fasana izy, dia nahita zatovo anankiray nipetrafa teo amin’ny ankavanana niakanjo akanjio fotsy, dia talanjona izy. Fa hoy ilay zatovo taminy: Aza talanjona; mitady an'i Jesosy avy any Nazaretta, Izay nohomboa tamin’ny hazo fjaliana, ianareo; efa nitsangana Izy; tsy ato Izy; jereo fa teo no nametrahany Azy. Fa mandidana, lazao amin’ny mpianany sy Petera fa mialoha anareo ho any Galilia Izy; any no hahitanareo Azy, araka izay nolazainy taminareo.”

Ray Masina ô! Manamasina anay amin’ny fahamarinana fa ny teninao no fahamarinana. Amen.


14. Rakotoniaina Jean de Dieu

Marka toko faha 16, ny andininy voalohany ka hatramin’ny faha 7, mivaky toy izao amin’ny anaran’i Jesosy: “Ary rehetra afaka ny andro Sabata, dia lasa nividy zava-manitra Maria Magdalena sy Salome ary Maria, renin’i Jakoba, mba handeha hanosotra ny fatin'i Jesosy. Ary nony maraina koa tamin’ny voalohan’andro amin’ny herinandro, rehetra niposaka ny masoandro, dia nankany amin’ny fasana izy ireo. Ary niresaka hoe izy: Iza re no hanakodia ny vato ho afaka amin’ny varavaram-pasana hisolo antsika? Fa nony nitraka izy, dia, indro, hitany fa efa voakodia niala ny vato; fa lehibe dia lehibe ny vato. Ary raha nitraka tao anatin’ny fasana izy, dia nahita zatovo anankiray nipetra teo amin’ny ankavanana niakanzo akanzo fotsy, dia talanjona izy. Fa hoh ilay zatovo taminy: Aza talanjona; mitady an'i Jesosy avy any Nazaret, Izay nohoomboana tamin'ny hazo fijialiana, ianareo; efa ntsangalana Izy; tsy ato Izy; jereo fa teo no nametrahany Azy.

Fa mandehana, laza amin’ny mpianany sy Petera fa mialoha anareo ho any Galilia Izy; any no hahitanareo Azy, araka izay nolazainy tamin’ny amin’ny fahamarinana. Amen.

Ry Ray Masina ô, manamasina anay amin’ny fahamarinana fahafoana ny teninao na fahamarinana. Amen.


Ny finoana izany dia tsy miriana amin’ny fahitana ny fasam-poana fa miriana amin’ny fanambaran’Andriamanitra izay nampilazainy ny Anjely hoe: efa nitsangana izy, tsy ato izy. Teny

tenin’ny Tompo fa tsy maintsy hampandrenesina ny filazantsaran’ny famonjena izao tontolo izao vao ho tonga ny farany. Ianao, izaho no anton’izany tantaram-pijalian’ny zanak’Andriamanitra izany. Izaho, ianao no anton’izany fitsanganan’ny zanak’Andriamanitra izany. Mifalia, miravao ary asehoy ny fifalianao amin’ny fanoloran-tena sy ny fanompoana ny Tompo amin’ny lafiny rehetra izay hahazoanao manao izany; eny, amin’ny alalan’ny tenantsika sy ny fananantsika ary hanome Azy ny voninahitra izay efa azy hatramin’ny taloha indrindra ka ho mandrakizay Amen.

15. Rahantanirina Vastyor


Ry Ray Masina ô, manamasina anay amin’ny fahamarina fa ny teninao no fahamarinana. Amen.


Izany tsy finoana izany indrindra no niteraka alahelo sy fahoriana lehibe ho azy. Tsy hanana fialiana sy fiadanam-po ny tsy finoana ny tenin’Andriamanitra sy ny tsy fandraisana izany fa fahoriana lehibe sy loza no aterak’izany tsy fandraisana ny tenin’ Andriamanitra izany.


Dia ho an’Andriamanitra irery ihany anie ny voninahitry izay azy hatramin’ny taloha indrindra ka ho mandrakizay. Amen.
16. Andriamanantoandro Léon Fidèle:

Aoka hivavaka isika rehetra:


Ry Ray Masina ö! Manamasina anay amín’ny fahamarinana fa ny teninao no fahamarinana, Amen!


Ry Ray Masina ö! Manamasina anay amín’ny fahamarinana fa ny teninao no fahamarinana, Amen!


170


171

Ho an’Andriamanitra irery ihany anie ny voninahitra hanananao ny fitiavany sy ny fahasoovan’i Jesosy Kristy Tompo ary ny fampiraisana amin’ny Fanahy Masina, Amen.

172
17. Rasolonahary Rodin Emmanuël


Ray Masina ö! Manamasina anay amin’ny fahamarinana fa ny teninao no fahamarinana. Amen.

Ry fiangonana malala, ho aminareo rehetra amin’ny fahasovana sy ny fiadanana sy amin’Andriamanitra Rainitra sy Jesosy Kristy Tompo. Amen.


Inona no soa entin’ny nahafatesany’i Tompo sy ny nitsangana ny tamin’ny maty? Aoka hazava tsara ny anton’ny fifaliantsika amin’ity andro anio ity. Voalahany indrindra, rehetra nitsangana tamin’ny maty Jesosy, nijaly sy maty, dia izaoo: tamin’i Jesosy no nianjera ny fahatezeran’Andriamanitra. Nefa tamin’izany nonomboana Azy teo amin’ny hazo fijaliana izany, dia nandresy ny fahaftesana sy ny devoly ary ny ota Izy. Ireo no fanetry be mahatonga ny tsy filaminana sy ny tsy fia danana eto amin’izao tontolo izao. Izay manota moa sy manakaiky ny


mpamonjy ahy, Izy no mpanafaka ahy, Izy no nanafaka ahy tamin’ny ota sy ny fahafatesana. Velona ho amin’ny fankatoavana Azy aho, hanaraka Azy mandrakizay, Amen.”


Ny fahasoavan’i Jesosy Kristy Tompo sy ny fiatran’Andriamanitra Ray ary ny firaisana amin’ny Fanahy Masina, ho aminareo rehetra anie, mandrakizay, Amen.
18. Randrianirina Solofoson Gilbert


Ny tenin’Andriamanitra amin’izao andro Paska izao, ry Havana, dia ho hitantsika araka ny filazantsara araka ny Marka toko faha 16, andininy voahohaney klara hatrimin’ny faha 7, izay mivaky toy izao amin’ny Anaran’i Jesosy: “Ary rehetra afaka ny andro Sabata, dia lasa nividy zava-manitra Maria Magdalena sy Salome ary Maria, renin’i Jakoba, mba handeha hanosotra ny fati’in’i Jesosy. Ary nony maraina koa tamin’ny voahohan’andro amin’ny herinandro, rehetra niposaka ny masoandro, dia nankany amin’ny fasana izy ireo. Ary niresaka hoe izy: Iza re no hanakodia ny vato no ho afaka amin’ny varavaram-paraha hisolo antsy, fa nony nitraka izy, dia, indro, hitany fa efa voakodia niala ny vato; fa lehibe dia lehibe ny vato. Ary raha niditra tao anatin’ny fasana izy, dia nahita zatovo anankiray nipetrao teo amin’ny ankanavanana niakanjo apanjo fotsy, dia talancona izy. Fa hoy ilay zatovo taminy: Aza talanjonra; mitady an’i Jesosy avy any Nazareta, Izay nohomboana tamin’ny hazo fijaliana, ianareo; efa nitsangana Izy; tso aty; jerefo fa teo no nametrahay Azy. Fa mandehana, lazao amin’ny mpanany sy Petera fa mialoha anareo ho any Galilia Izy; any no habitanareo Azy, araka izay nolazaingy taminareo.”

Ray masina ô, manamasina anay amin’ny fahamarinana fa ny teninao no fahamarinana. Amen.


Kanefa na dia eo aza ireo Alahady maro isamadisana ny amin’izao Paska izao, tso mba azo adinoa ary tsy mba azo dingana ny herinandro masina izay ahatsiarovantsika ny amin’ny fijalian’i Jesosy, ahatsiarovantsika ny fahafatesan’i Jesosy, satria izany no mialoha izao fahafatesanana izao. Raha ny fahafatesan’i Jesosy no jerena, dia fahafatesana hafa tso toy ny rehetra satria fahafatesana nialohavam-pahoriana izany ary fahafatesana nialohavam-pijaliana. Mafy tokoa raha izany nanjo an’i Jesosy izany, eny fa na dia ny jiolihy niara-nomboana taminy aza dia


Nambarany anao izany. Indro velomin’ny Tompo aminao izay rehetra nambarany taminao


Voninahitra anie ho an’Andriamanitra Ray sy Zanaka ary ny Fanahy Masina izay hatramin’ny taloha indrindra ka ho mandrakizay.

179
20. Rasamimanana Raymond


Ray Masina ô, manamasina anay amin’ny fahamarinana fa ny teninayo no fahamarinana. Amen.


Voninahitra anie ho an’Andriamanitra Ray sy Zanaka ary ny Fanahy Masina.

$\text{Ity tenin'Andriamanitra anjarantsika ity dia mirakitra ny zava-nitranga, mirakitra ny vaovao mahafalin'ny Paska dia izay niseho iny marainan’ny andro voalohany ny herinandro tsy manam-pahara araka ny fahitan’i Marka azy. Maraina tsy ho hay adinoa mandrakizay ary tonga fototry ny finoa Kristiana mandraka anio. Rehefa afaka ny andron’ny fitsaharana, ny andro Sabata sady andron’ny Jiosy, dia iay fotoana faramparany naiian’ireo mpomba an’ny Jiosy tao anatin’ny hitsokitsoky ny famoizam-po sy ny fahakiviana, ny haketrahana tanteraka noho ny fahatatesan’i Kristy. Tao amin’izany no nipsosaka ilay maraina, maraina ny andro voalohany ny herinandro, andro fahatelo taorian’ny nanomboana an’i Kristy teo amin’ny hazo fijaliana, telo andro taorian’ny fahatatesan’ny Tompo, telo andro taorian’ny nanandevana ny Tompo, andro voalohany amin’ny herinandro, andro nipsosahan’ny vaovao mahafalana ny Paska fa velona Jesosy. Nivadika ho haravoana iay famoizam-po sy hakiviana izay efa nandifotra ireo mpianat’i Jesosy. Nihoa ho fandresena iay tahotra sy faharesena efa nogohin’’ireo mpomba an’i Jesosy hany ka talanja ny izy ireo. Iny maraina iny no niomankomana ho any am-pasana ireo vehibavy rehefa avy nivyidy zava-manitra tamin’ny fahataperan’ny andro Sabata. Izany hoe rehefa hilentika ny masoandro ny Sabata, ka naneno ny anjombona fa tapitra ny andro fitsaharana, dia lasa nivyidy zavatra, niomana ho amin’ny raha hampitso izy ireo. Nivyidy menaka manitra sy miopa Maria Magdalena sy Salome ary Maria renin’i Jakoba, araka ny voalazan’i Marka, ary nony maraina dia niroso nankany ny fahatana, tele nivala ity, nivoaka haingana izy telo vavy dia nandiso tamin’ny vanto,


24. Andriamongolandy


Ary eto dia ahariharin’i Marka indrindra fa vevihavy no vavolombelona nahita maso voalohany ny amin’izany fandresen’i Kristy ny fahafatesana izany. Tsy izy izany fa i Salome, Maria Magdalena ary Maria renin’i Jakoba. Ny fikendren’i Marka amin’ny fitantaranana eto dia ho fampaharezana, ho fanorana ny finoana Kristiana izay mahatsiario ho maleny, mahatsiario ho tsinontsinona azy natao an-kilaba teo anatrehan’ny fanenjehana azy izay efa nataon’ny mpitondra sy ny fanjakana azy ny fiaraha-monina amin’izay. Aseho fa ny vavolombelona voalohany eto dia vevihavy. Olona natao an-kilaba izany, olona natoa tsinontsinona, azy tsy ninoan-teny fa nahilika an-jorom-bala, izany hoe fa vevihavy naotra ho anatin’ny fahafoany.

Eto i Marka dia maneho fa ireo vevihavy telo izay nankany amin’ny fasany ho vevihavy fa manimiresa azy manan-dikatra ny fahafatesana amin’ny fahafatesana. Amin’ny amin’ny fahafatesana no hasina mizany no voafalana ny amin’ny amin’ny fahafatesana.

186
zava-manitra tao an-tranon‘i Simonina boka. Nahatezitra ny mpianatra izay, satria menaka manitra lafo vidy izay tokony ho azo namidy 300 denaria ka homena malahelo. Nefa hoy ny Tompo taminy hoe: “ny malahelo dia eto aminarce mandrakariva fa Izaho kosa tsy mba ho eto aminarce; koa izy dia manositra Ahy ho fania-miaisa Aminy eo amin’ny tantaran‘ny fanatanterahana ny asa famonjena; hatramin’ny andro izay nahavelomany izany ary indrindra indrindra amin’izao tampony izao, amin’ny fitsanganany amin’ny maty, dia ny vevihavy no atao‘ny Tompo vavolombelona handray voalohany, habita maso voalohany ny amin’ny fitsanganany, ka nandray hafatra voalohany mba boentiny sy hambarany any amin’ny mpianatra. Ity tantara eto ity dia maneho ihany koa toe-javatra mitovitovit ny amin’izay misy eto amin’ny firenentsika, fa tsy mba hisaina loatra eo amin’ny fisainaina malagasy ny zon’ny vevihavy; tsi dia mba to-teny loatra izy eo anionv‘ny fivoria-m-pokonolona amin’ny arambara aza fa tsy mitan-kazo manga ny vevihavy. Na dia ny fiangonana dia toa ahitana fanaoavana an kilabao azy, ny amin’ny tsi fahamarina manjara toerana ny vevihavy amin’ny rahara fa sahasany fanompoana izay atao amin’ny fiangonana.


zo feno amin’ny famonjena izay nataon’i Kristy teo amin’ny hazofijaliana ny vehivavy. Koa raha manana zo ho amin’ny famonjena izy, dia manana zo koa ho amin’ny fanompoana mba hanambara izany famonjena efa azony izany, amin’ireo manodidina azy, amin’ny ankohonany, amin’ny mpiara-belona aminy, ka rariny raha hatolotra azy ny fanompoana rehetra ny zo feno hahafahana manatanteraka izany hafatra sy andraikitra apetra kyo ny Tompo aminy izany. Isika olombelona mazâna no alaim-pahanahy hijery ny manatanjaka, hifidy ny manan-tsaina na ny olo-marina, angamba. Fa Jesosy kosa, rehetra nifidy Izy, dia hoy ny teniny: “tsy fiy aminareno no hendry, tsy fiy aminareno no manan-tsaina, tsy fiy aminareno no avo razana, fa Andriamanitry nifidy ny adala ao amin’izao tontolo izao, nifidy ny malemy mba hampahamena ny hendry”.


Amin’izao fotoana izao dia efa mazava aminao, mazava amintsika fa mpisorona, nefa toa maro no mangina, tsy sahy mijoro, tsy sahy manambara, tsy sahy manohitra ny vato misakana ny asa, ny fahavalo izay misakana anao tsy hanao ny fanompoana izay napetraky ny Tompo, fa nangovitra sy toran-kovitra ka mihanoa ny mianonana amin’izao. Fotoana tokony hitnnenantsika izao, fotoana tokony tsy hanginanao izao fa hanambaranao, hiadianao amin’izay rehetra vato misakana no amin’izay rehetra fahavalo mahatahotra ko misakana tsy hanatanteraka ny asa fanompoana izay napetrak’Andriamanitra aminao. Tsarovy fa eo amin’ny tantara’ny fiangonantsika Malagasy dia tiana ny manamarika fa amin’ireo Ray aman-drein’ny Fifohazana efatra izay nataon’ny Tompo fitaovana hanokatra ny Toby Lehibe samihafa dia vehivavy no nataony. Oloana tsinotsinona izany, olona malemy izy, ary voambara aza fa tsy iray izay niasa naharitra indrindra dia vehivavy tsy nahay namaky teny na nanoratana akory, nefa tsy nanan-tahotra izy, tsy nataony ho vato misakana azy tamin’ny asa fanompoana ny fanakilasiana sy fiheverana ny vehivavy ho tsinotsinona. Tsy natahotra na nangovitra izy, toy izay hita eto amin’ny tantara’ireo vehivavy telo izay nisehoan’ny Tompo tamin’ny alalan’ny anjely, sady nomeny iraka manokana nefa tsy nanatanteraka izany. Ny fahanginan’ireo vehivavy dia toa manambara dahafahamena aza izany, manambara dahafahamena izany. Raha ny marina dia eken’ny fahavalontsika ny iafran’ny filazants’i Marka hatreoa amin’ny andininy faha 8, izay antsoina hoe “famaranana fohey” no tena sorat’i Marka amin’izany, saingy izao hitan’ireo mpandinika izay nandika tato aorianfa fa tsy tsara ny ampijanonana ny tantara ao amin’izany fahanginan’ireo vehivavy izany, ka dia nampidiriny sy niasany hoe “famaranana lava” mba ho fanehoana fa tsy

Ny filazantsara araka an’i Marka toko faha 16:1-8 izay anjaranntsika eto dia milaza ny amin’ny nitsanganan’i Jesosy Kristy tamin’ny maty. Raha ny fandaharana azy araka ny perikopa ao amin’ny fiangonana araka ny taom-piangonana dia tokony amin’ny andro Pasaka no itoriana izao teny izao satira ny vointoant-keviny dia manambara indrindra ny amin’ny hevity ny soratra masina manambara ny andro Pasaka. Eto ary izay zavatra lehibe indrindra tiana hambara amin’izao teny izao dia “efa nitsangana tamin’ny maty Jesosy”.


izay tsy nitsahatra nikaraka ny Tompo tamin’ny dia rehetra izay nalehany. Koa eto ary, raha teny an-dalana ho any am-pasana ireo veihavvy izay very hevitra - nahita fahagaganana -, nidiitra tao amin’ny fasana - nahita fahagaganana - aryi niala tao mbola zava-mahagaha koa no hontiny handeha hamakivaky izao fiainanana izao: hilaza vaovao mahafaly amin’ny mpianatra hoe “efa nitsangana ny Tompo”.


Izy”. Zavatra tsy atao mahagaga izany satria nokendren’i Marka ny hanambara tsotra amin’ny teny fohy ny fitsanganan’i Jesosy tamin’ny maty, ka rehefa nitsangana Izy dia hitondra fiainana ho an’izay rehetra mpanara-dia Azy, izay rehetra mino Azy izany.


Ho an’Andriamanitra ny voninahitra izay azy hatramin’ny taloha indrindra ka haharitra mandrakizay. Amen.
26. Andrianjafy O. B.

Manomboka ho fahatongavan’i Jesosy Kristy eto an-tery ny filazantsara manotolo ka miafara amin’ny Paska. Samy manana ny fomba hanoehoany ny tantara ny Evanjelisitra 4 dahy. Fa ny teboka hiraisan’izy ireo kosa dia izao : samy miara-milaiza izy fa ny fínoana no nitsanganan’ny Tompo tamin’ny maty, dia miorina amin’ireto zavatra roa ireto :

Ny fahitana ny fasana foana

Ny fishehoan’i Jesosy Kristy tamin’ny mpianany rehetra nitsangana tamin’ny maty izy

Ny tantara hatrehintsika amin’ity Perikopa ity dia ny filazany ny fasana foana izay porofo voalohany indrindra fa velona ny Tompo. Zava-dehíbe ho an’ny Kristianina tokoa ity texte ity satria mitondra antsika ho amin’ireto fahalahala ireto lohahevitra ireto roa ireto :

Ny voalohany ny tantaran’ny Paska no mampahafantatra antsika ny momba an’i Jesosy rehetra

Ny faharoa manonmana antsika hiatrika ny fiainaina Kristianina , ny tantaran’ny fasana foana.

fijaliana sy ny fitsanganany tamin’ny maty no nanatanterahany izany fanomboana masina izany. Izany ary dia tsy fantatra mazava ny tantaran’i Jesosy raha tsy tamin’ny Paska.


Ry Kristianina malala ao amin’ny Tompo, zava-dehibe no entin’ny Paska ho antsiaka satria eo no manala sarona ny zava-miafina momba an’i Kristy manontolo. Ny fiajanana Kristianina tamin’ny fotoana izay, tamin’ny fotoana voaloany nirenanana ny fiajanana raha voadonam-pahoriana tamin’ny fanenjahana Romanina dia nametram-panontaniana ihany tamin’ny fanatrehan’Andriamanitritra ny fiaianana. Kanefa noho izao taratsy nalefan’i Marka ny
fomba fanatrehan’i Kristy ny fiainan’ny fiangonana Kristianina dia nampahafantatra azy ireo fa velona tokoa ny Tompo, tsy ao am-pasana izy, ary na dia nidonam-pahoriana izy dia mahatsapa fa manatrika azy tokoa i Kristy. Ary tsapanly tokoa fa ny zavatra nahazo azy tamin’izay fotoana izay dia efa nandalovan’i Kristy koa. Nandalo fanesoana i Kristy, nandalo fanenjahana i Kristy, nandalo fanompohana tamin’ny hazo fijaliana i Kristy. Voahombo tamin’ny hazo fijaliana koa na nampiadiana tamin’ny bibidia ny Kristianina tamin’izay fotoana izay, dia afaka nitraka ihany izy, dia afaka nidera an’Andriamanitira ihany tahaka ny nataon’i Stefana maritiora. Eo anatrehan’izany, velona i Kristy dia velona koa isika, afaka manatrika izao androm-piaimantsika izao na dia misy aza ny fahoriana samihafa amin’izao fiainana ankehiriny hatrehantsiaka izao.
Na dia misy aza ny fahasarotana amine’ny fihatrehan’ny fiangonana ny fitoriana ny filazantsara, dia ny fahitana ny fasana foana no manambara fa tsy any am-pasana intsony i Kristy fa velona Izy, ary ny batisa, ny fanasan’i Tompo, ny fitoriana ny filazantsara, ny fisian’ny fiangonana etsy sy eroa dia manambara fa manatrika antsika amin’ny fotoana rehetra i Kristy.
Voninahitra anie ho an’Andriamanitra Ray Zanaka ary ny Fanahy Masina izay hatramin’ny taloha indrindra ka ho mandrakizay, Amen.
26. Andrianjafy O.B (second sermon)

Mk 16:1-7

Ny perikopa izay raisintsiaka eto dia izay voalaza ao amin’ny Marka toko faha 16 andininy voalohany ka hatramin’ny andininy faha 8 vakiana amin’ny anaran’i Jesosy:

“Ary rehefa afaka ny andro Sabata, dia lasa nividy zava-manitira Maria Magdalena sy Salome ary Maria, renin’i Jakoha, mba handeha hanosotrana ny fatin’i Jesosy. Ary nony maraina koa tamin’ny voaloahan’andro amin’ny herinandro, rehefa niposaka ny masoandro, dia nankany amin’ny fasana izy ireo. Amin’ny niresaka hoe izy: Iza re ne ho hanakodia ny vato ho afaka amin’ny variavaram-pasana hisolo antsika? Fa nony nitraka izy, dia, indro, hitany fa efa voakodia niala ny vato; fa lehibe dia lehibe ny vato. Amin’ny raha nidiitra tao anatin’ny fasana izy, dia nahita zatovo anankiray nipetraka teo amin’ny ankavanana niakanjo aho mondo fotsy, dia talanjona izy. Fa hoy ilay zatovo tamin’ny Aza talanjona: mitady an’i Jesosy avy any Nazarea. Izay niohombona tamin’ny hazo fajialiana, janareo; efa nitsangana Izy; tsy amin’ny samihafa. Fa manderhana, lazao amin’ny mpianany sy Petera fa mimaloa anareo ho any Galilia Izy; any no hahananareo Azy, araka izay nolazainy taminareo. Dia nivoaoka izy ka laza nandotra niala tamin’ny fasana, fa tora-kovitra sady talanjona izy; amin’ny fah的最大の学習結果を引用します。
Jesosy ny olona tamin’izay fotoana izay; ary na dia ny mpianatra koa aza dia voan’izany toetsaina izany satria Jesosy Kristy dia niseho ho Mesia miafina. Ary izany no anehoan’i Marka Azy
amin’ny alalan’ny teny hoe: “tsy tonga mba hotompoina Jesosy fa tonga mba hanompo”. Raha
Andriamanitra no hanompo dia manambara izany fa miafina ny maha Andriamanidtra an’i
Jesosy. Ary hitantsika izany toe-javatra izany tamin’ireto vehivavy izay nankany am-pasana
hanosotra menaka ny fatin’i Jesosy, satria voan’ny toe-tsaina tsy nahafantatra ny maha
Andriamanitra an’i Jesosy izy ireo, na dia teo aza ny asa mahagaga nataony; ka ny zavatra
nantenainy voalohany indrindra, amin’izao diany mankany am-pasana izao, dia ny hahita ny
fatin’ny Jesosy mbola miampatra ao am-pasana; vatana mangatsiaka no nantenainy ho hita tao
am-pasana. Moa ve tsy efa nilazan’i Jesosy ny momba Azy izy ireto? Impiry Jesosy no efa
nanambara taminy fa rehefa afaka fotoana vitsivitsy dia homboana amin’ny hazofijaliana Izy ary
hitsangana amin’ny maty amin’ny andro fahatelo? Eny , nilazany tokoa izy nefa tsy mbola nazava
taminy izany raha tsy amin’izao fotoana handrenesany fa efa nitsangana Jesosy. Ny zavatra tian’i
Marka hampahafantarina antsika amin’ity perikopa ity dia izao: tonga teto an-tany Jesosy Kristy
mba hanavotra ny olombelona amin’ny fahotana sy ny fahafatesana ary ny devoly. Tamin’ny
alalan’ny fahafatesany teo amin’ny hazofijaliana sy ny fitsanganany tamin’ny maty no
nahatanterahany izany fanompoana masina izany. Noho izany ary dia tsy fantatra mazava ny
momba an’i Jesosy raha tsy tamin’ny tantaran’ny Paska, ary ilay miaramila nanatrika ny
fahafatesan’i Jesosy Kristy dia nahatsapa fa “Zanak’Andriamanitra tokoa ity lehilahy ity”. Ny
vahoaka tamin’ny fotoan’andron’i Jesosy dia nahita an’i Jesosy ho toy ny mpaminany, mpanao
fahagagana tahaka an-dry Eliasy ry Elisa ihany; fa tsy nahita an’i Jesosy ho Andriamanitra izy
satria tamin’izay fotoana izay dia nisy ihany koa ireo mpanao fahagagana tahaka ny nataon’i
Jesosy Kristy. Ankehitriny anefa dia mbola misy koa ireo Kristiana izay mihevitra an’i Jesosy ho
mpanao fahagagana ihany, ho mpanafaka azy amin’ny fahasahiranana ara-nofo ihany. Any ka
Jesosy dokotera no hitany, fa tsy Jesosy mpanavotra amin’ny fahafatesana, tsy
JesosyAndriamanitra nanolotra ny tenany hamonjy azy amin’ny fahafatesana. Any ka raha
idonan’ny fahoriana izy, ohatra, maty olo-malala, dia mihozongozona ny finoany.
Hoy ny anjely tamin’ireto vehivavy izay nankany am-pasana: “mitady an’ny Jesosy avy
any Nazareta izay nomboana tamin’ny haz fijaliana ianareo? Efa nitsangana Izy; tsy ato Izy,
jereo fa teo no nametrahana Azy”. Filazantsara feno ho antsika Kristiana ity teny ity, satria
mampahafantatra antsika fa velona Jesosy izay ivavahantsika; ary raha velona Izy dia ho velona
koa isika. Mitondra fanantenana vaovao ho antsika ny fahalalana ny fitsanganan’i Jesosy
tamin’ny maty, satria nanomboka tamin’izay no nahalalantsika fa azo resena ny fahafatesana. Fa
talohan’izany kosa ny fantantsika dia izao: teraka ny olona, dia mitombo, ary rehefa antitra dia
miafara amin’ny fahafatesana, dia tapitra eo ny tantarany. Ary tsy izany ihany koa ny tombontsoa entin’ny Paska ho antsika; fa mbola manomana antsika hiatrika ny fiainana Kristiana koa ny
tantaran’ny “fasana foana”. Tsy porofon’ny fitsanganan’i Jesosy fotsiny ny fahitana ny fasana
foana fa fototra iorenan’ny finoana ny fitsanganana amin’ny maty mihitsy. Raha foana ny fasana
nandevenana Azy, aiza ary Kristy amin’izao? Mazava amintsika Kristiana ny valin’izany, satria
hoy ny tenin’Andriamanitra: “na aiza na aiza iangonan’ny olona telo amin’ny anarako dia eo
afovoany Aho”! Mino koa isika fa izay toerana itoriana ny tenin’Andriamanitra dia eo Kristy.
Mino koa isika fa miara-belona amintsika Kristy noho ny batisa. Indrindra indrindra, ny
fihinanantsika ny nofon’i Kristy sy hisotroantsika ny ràny eo amin’ny sakrametan’ny Fanasan’ny
Tompo dia manambara indrindra fa manatrika antsika amin’ny fotoana rehetra Jesosy. Ary izany
fanatrehan’i Jesosy Kristy izany dia toy ny jiro manazava ny lalana izay tsy maintsy diavintsika
Kristiana amin’izao andro ahavelomantsika izao. Voalohany, ny fanatrehan’ny Kristy dia
mahatonga antsika hahatoky fa, na inona na inona mihatra amin’izao fiainana izao, dia miaro
antsika amin’izany Izy; ary izany toky izany no nahantonga an’i Paoly milaza ao amin’ny
episitily ho an’ny Romana hoe: “iza no hahasaraka antsika amin’ny fitiavan’i Kristy? Fahoriana
va sa fahantrana sa fanenjehana sa mosary sa fitanjahana sa loza sa sabatra?” Ny fanatrehan’i

197




Voninahitra anie ho Andriamanitra Ray sy Zanaka ary Fanahy Masina, izay Azy hatramin’ny taloha indrindra ka ho mandrakizay. Amen!
Ny tenin’Andriamanitra izay horesahina sy hotoriana fohy; filazantsara araka ny Marka toko faha 16:1-8. Toy izao no fivakin’ny teny amin’ny Anaran’i Jesosy: 

“Ary rehetra afaka ny andro Sabata, dia lasa nividy zava-manitra Maria Magdalena sy Salome ary Maria, renini’Jakoba, mba handeha nosorohasa ny fatini’Jesosy. Azy nony maraina koa tamin’ny voalohan’andro amin’ny herinandro, rehetra nipoaka ny masoandro, dia nankany amin’ny fasana izy ireo. Azy niresaka hoe izy: Iza re no hanakodia ny vato ho afaka amin’ny varavaram-pasana hisolo antsika? Fa nony nitraka izy, dia, indro, hitany fa efa voakodia niala ny vato; fa lehibe dia lehibe ny vato. Azy raha nitraka tao anatin’ny fasana izy, dia nahiba zatovo anankiray nipetra teo amin’ny ankavanana niakanjo akanjo fotsy, dia talanjona izy. Fa hio ilay zatovo taminy: Aza talanjona; mitady an’i Jesosy avy any Nazaretar, Izay nohoombaona tamin’ny hazo fajialana, Ianareo; efa nitsangana Izy; tsy ato Izy; jereo fa teo no nametrahany Azy. Fa mandonhana, lazao amin’ny mpianany sy Petera fa mialoha anareo ho any Galilia Izy; any no hahitanareo Azy, araka izay nolazainy taminareo. Dia nivoaka izy ka lasa nandotsiatria niala tamin’ny fasana, fa tora-kovitra sady talanjona izy; azy tsy mba niłaza na inona na inona tamin’olon’ny inona, satria natahotra.”

Ry Ray Masina ô, manamasina anay amin’ny fahamarinana fa ny teninao no fahamarinana. Amen!


Voninahitra ho an’Andrimanitra Ray, Zanaka ary Fanahy Masina izay hatramin’ny taloha indrindra ka ho mandrakizay. Amen!
28. Rabaritsotra


Ry Ray Masina ô! Manamasina anay amin’ny fahamaraminana, ny Tenininao no fahamamarina. Amana.

Ry fiangonona malala, ho aminareo rehetra anie ny fahasobavana sy ny fiafianana avy amin’Andriamanitra Rainisana sy Jesosy Kristy Tompo.


hatratraranao ny fahasambarana mandrakizay izay efa nomaniny ho anao sy izay rehetra mino Azy.


Raiso ny fitahiana: Ny fahasoavan’i Jesosy Kristy Tompontsika, ny fitiavan’Andriamanitra Ray ary ny firaisana ao amin’ny Fanahy Masina, ho aminareo rehetra anie mandrakizay mandrakizay. Amen !


Ny zava-misy dia izao: ny iraka nanpanaoavina ireto vehibavy ireto dia ny hilaza amin’ny mpianatra sy i Petera ny amin’ny fitsanganan’i Jesosy tamin’ny maty ary ny nialohavan’i Jesosy azy ireo tany Galilea, araka ny teniny. Ny famakiana ny andininy faha 8 anefa dia ahibana fa rehfa nandre ny teny ireo vehibavy dia niveoka ny fasana ary nandositra niana teo. Hazavain’i Matio ao amin’ny toko faha 8 andininy faha 8 ny ireo fihetsik’ireto vehibavy ireto, fa tahatra sy hafahafahana no nameno ny fony, ka nihasakazaka ireo nanpehina nanambana ny voavao mahafaly tany amin’ny mpianatra. Ato amin’i Marka anefa dia ambarany fa tora-kovitra sy talanona izy ireo azy nandositra noho ny tahotra; ary ambonin’izany dia nangina izy ireo tsy nilaza

204

Ry havana malala, eo anatrehan’izany tenin’Andriamanitra izany dia tsaroana ny tenin’ny Anjely hoe: “nahoana no ato amin’ny maty no hitadiavanareo ny velona?” Marina fa amin’ny maha malagasantsika dia tena mino isika fa ny razana dia mitahy, ka izany no mahatonga antisika hikolokolo ny fatty. Ny razana izay efa any am-pasana, izay efa lasa vovoka dia mboha kolokolointsika ihany satria hananontany isika fa ao amin’ny izany no hitahian-ka ny fihay izany sy ny zavatra rehetra izay tadiavintsika amin’izao fiainana izao; kanefa amin’ny maha Kristiana antisika, Jesosy dia nanambara, asehon’Andriamanitra amin’ny alalan’ity teny eto amin’ny Marka ity, fa tena tsy nankasitrahany ny zavatra saika natoana’ireto veihavy veihavy ireto, dia ny hanosorana menaka indray, hanosorana zava-manitra inary ny fatin’i Jesosy izay efa tany am-pasana. Ry havana malala ao amin’ny Tompo, tsy navelan’i Jesosy hahita Azy tao anatin’ny fasana ireto veihavy veihavy ireto fa navelany kosa handray ny faharana izay natao ny, ho setrin’ny fitiaviana izay nasaheho. Koa araka izany dia manan-kambara amintsika ny tenin’Andriamanitra, fa “tsy vonona hianso ny marina Andriamanitra fa miason’ny mpanotra hibehaka.”. Koa irae lahala efa nahazatra antisika, ny fandehana amin’ny fasana, itadiavana fitahiana, itadiavana vela amin’izao fiainana izao ka hanaovana ny famadahan-drazana, fonosina, kolokoloina ny razana mba hihafa, dia havaivain tsoatra antisika fa ahoana moa no ahafahan’ny razana hitahy antisika raha toa ka ny hikarakara ny momba azy aza tsy vitany? Koa maika fa ny hikarakara anao izay velona? Fa raha ny hikarakara ny momba azy dia ianao velona no hikarakara ny razana fa tsy izy no mahakarakara ny tenany. Sanatria manao tsinontsinona ny razana izay nitokian’ny malagasysa, tsia! Tsy izany mihiatsy! Fa


Koa amin’izao andro Paska izao dia avia isika samy hanavoa ny fanoloran-tenantsika ho an’Andriamanitra, ka hanany ny fahazaran-dratsy rehetra, ary handeha amin’ny fanavaozana ny saina izay nataon’Andriamanitra ho antisika. Ialoa ny fahazaran-dratsy rehetra, tohoero izany, tohoero amin’ny Anaran’i Jesosy, fa hana tanteraka aminao ny tenin’Andriamanitra, dia ny amin’ny hahamanompomo mahatoky anao, no dia ao anatin’ny maha ianao anao aza, fa izany indrindra no niantsoany anao. Fantany ny momba anao rehetra, kanefa nirtsa tsi ny njery izany Izy, fa ianao no nontefidy hanambara amin’ny hafa ihany koa ny fahasoavana izay efa natolony anao. Mitsangàna
amagedena, fa indro Jesosy momba anao; ary Izy no hahatanteraka ny fikasana tsara rehetra ao am-ponao. “Izy” irery ihany “no lalana”, “Izy” irery ihany “no fahamarinana” ary “Izy” irery ihany no” fiainana” izay antony hahavelomanao.

Dia ho an’Andriamanitra irery ihany ny voninahitra izay Azy efa hatamin’ny taloha indrindra ka ho mandrakizay, Amen.

Fomba telo samihafa no nanaovan’ny Egyptiana izany fanosoram-paty sy ny fitahirisana izany; fomba voaloohany raha tena sy mpanan-karena ilay olona dia esoriny ny atidohan’ny maty ary ny tsinainy rehetra tandrify amin’ny lanivohany sy ny atin’ny faty rehetra, dia sasany divay sy zava-manitra ny ati-faty, avy eo dia sesefany miora sy kasia sy asfalta mbamin’ny zavatra manitra samihafa ary dia zairiny indray ho ny lanivohan’ilay maty namoahana ny tao anatin’ny. Avy eo dia alona 70 andro ao anatin’ny karazan-tsira atao hoe “natorona” ny faty; ka aorian’izany dia sasana indray vao fonosina lamba hariry madimika. Ary io lamba io dia hosaorana dity sy asifalta. Vita izany vao atao ao am-pasana ny faty. Ny fomba faharhoa dia eo amin’ny fandaniavana atao’ny mponina; tsy esorina ny tsinain’ilay maty fa asiana solika sedera ny ao anatin’ilay paty ary alona indray ao anatin’ny natorona 70 andro ihany koa. Rehefa afaka izany dia levona ny nofo rehetra ka hoditra sy taolana sisa ary dia iny no halevina rehetra nofomosina-damba. Ny fahatero dia ny an’ny valalabemandry satria kely ny fandianiana, asiana kasia kely ny ao anatin’ny paty ary alona ao anaty natorona toy ny teo aloha, ny sasany kosa anefa dia manolo asifalta ny kasia. Raha izany ary ny fomba fanaon’ny Egyptiana, manao aloha kosa ny fanaon’ny Jiosy? Taty aorian’ny lavitra vao hitan’ny Baiboly fa manamboatra faty koa ny Jiosy. Izany dia nanoboka tamin’ny Nisana mpanjak’ny Joda ao amin’ny 2 Tantara toko faha 16 andininy faha 14 ka hatramin’ny andron’i Jesosy, Jaona toko faha 19 andininy 39 ka hatramin’ny faha 40. Ary izany koa no kasain’ireto veihavy ireto hatao taorian’ny nifihany. Miorsa ny hazonoana maromaro no
ahosotra sy afoho ny maty miaraka amin’ny lamba; nefy toa tsy niaro ny faty amin’ny fahalovana izany, raha ny tantaran’i Lazarosy no nojerentsika. Toy ny an’ny Egyptianana, naharitra hatramin’ny arivo taona vitsivitsy mihitsy aza ny tsy fahalovana ny faty.

Hanosotr amin’ny nihatangavan’izay telo mirahavavy ireto. Safotry ny fahoriana izy rehetra amin’ny nahafatesan’i Jesosy, very ny fanantenany, adino ireo fampianaranana izay nolazain’i Jesosy ny amin’ny hitsanganany amin’ny maty, adino ireo fahagagasana sy famantarana rehetra nataon’i Jesosy teo anatrehan’izy ireo fa saron’ny fahoriana sy ny fahadisoam-pananthenana. Adinony ny nananganan’i Jesosy ny zanakavavin’i Jairo, ilay lahitokan’ny mpitondra tena tao Naina ary Lazarosy izay efa maina. Tsy izany koa ve no mahazo antsika ankehitriny rehefa iharam-pahasahiranana sy fahoriana? Ny olana no avelantsika hanafoatra antsika ka tsy hitantsika ny voninahitry Jesosy Kristy; arakaraka ny mampiondrika antsika ao amin’ny fahoriana mahazo antsika no tsy ahitantsika an’i Jesosy vonona hitondra izany fahoriana izany miaraka amintsika; arakaraka ny isaintsainantsika ny fahoriana no ahitantsika ny amin’ny fahoralovesana anao dia mitra fanao amin’ny fahoriaha sy ny fahadiana sy ny fahadi soam-pitiavany.

Ahariharin’ity perikopa eto ity ny maha tompon’ny aina an’i Jesosy ka tsy azon’ny nahafatesana hozonina, aseho eto fa resin’i Jesosy ny fahafatesana, nitsangana Izy ka mamerina indray ny finoan’ireo mpianatana sy ny fanantenana izay very amin’ny fahafatesany. Ambaran’ity iraka avy any an-danitra ity fa maty tokoa Jesosy izay nohoomboa taminañ’ny nazo fijaliana, saingy tena nitsangana marina tokoa ka tsy tra tra ao am-pasana itsony. Izany vaovao mahafaly izany dia nampaherezana ireto vevihavy izay mbola nitanondriana ireto, ary rehefa nampaherezina izy ireto dia nasaingi nitory izany zava-mahagaga mafa mahafaly loatra izany any amin’ireo mpianatra mbola safotry ny alahelo. Nanoro ny toerana halehan’ireto mpianatra ny Anjely fa miohala azy ireto any amin’i Jesosy Kristy. Izany fahafahan’i Jesosy mandahe izany dia porofo mitohoka amin’ny tenda ny fahafatesany amin’ny fahaelowan’ny fahafatesana no tao tsiakinao amin’ny fahafatesana sy ny fahafahana nifanohitra amin’ny olona no vao maika nampangovitra azy ka nampangina azy. Inona loatra ary amin’ny nampangina azy ireto hila sy fahafahana sy fahafahan’ny fahafatesana amin’ny fahaelovan’ny Jesosy Kristy. Teo amin’ny fiaraha-monina Jiosy mantsoy, ary


mitovy an’izany koa ny Malagasy mandraka ankehiriny, dia tsy mba tia kabary ny vehivavy, indrindra hilaiza zavatra mikasika fivavahana; tsy isaina ny vehivavy sy ny zaza raha misy fanisana; ohatra raha nanao ny fahagagana ny amin’ny mofo sy ny hazan-drano vitsitsitsy Jesosy dia ny lehlahy ihany no nisaina, ankoatry ny zaza amam-behivavy. Noho izany dia natahotra nytsy hoeken-teny, holazaina hoe mpandainga ireto vehivavy ireto, toy ny voalaza ao amin’ny Lioka toko faha 24 andininy faha 11; katsy sahy tokoa izy ireo fa andrao hatao tsinontsinona ny teniny. Tsy izany koa ny fiaraha-monina Malagasy jentilisa, tsy miteny am-pivioriana ny vehivavy, ary raha sendra mba miteny izy ireo dia hamaivanina izay lazainy ka tenenina hoe araka ny fiteny Antanosy: “zaza amin’ampela” na “resaky ny zaza amam-behivavy” ka tsy hasiana vidiny. Navesatra tamin’ireto vehivavy ireto izany, Jesosy rahateo tsy hitany, ka dia nangina izy ireo.

Ny antony faharoa sady lehibe dia ny tsy finoan’ireto vehivavy ireto; tsy nino izy ireto fa nitsangana tokoa Jesosy satria, araka ny voalaza teo, tsy hita maso izy. Noho izany dia natahotra nyhilaza zavatra tsy fahitana izy. Ny tsy finoana an’i Jesosy dia tsy ahitana fiadanana sy fifialiana ka dia mbohita mitoeto ha fahoririana mandrakariva sy ny famoizam-pon’ny olona izay tsy manana Azy. Tsy mahatsapa fafahana mihtisy ny tsy mino fa mbohita fatopatoran’ny tahotra maro samihafa, indrindra fa ny tahotra ny fafahatesana. Ary izany indrindra no nahatongavan’i Jesosy, ka nahafatesany teo amin’ny hazofijaliana ary ny nitsangany, dia ny hanafahany ny olona izay nandany ny fainainy rehetra tamin’ny fanandevozana noho ny tahotra ny fafahatesana, hohy ny mpanoratra ny Hebreo, satria fifialiana lehibe ho an’ny olona rehetra , hohy ny Anjely ny nahaterahan’ny Mpanomy, araka ny filazantsara’i Lyoka”. Koa na dia velona Jesosy nandresy ny fafahatesana ho ahy sy ho anao, ho antsika rehetra, raha tsy mino isika dia mbohita hiteo amin’ny tahotra ihany fa tsy hanana hafialiana sy fahasaahiana hitory an’i Jesosy velona ka lasa misakanaka ny asa fitioriana mihafahana izy. Izay tsy mino ny fitsanganan’i Jesosy Kristy amin’ny maty dia tsy ho afaka hitory izany mihtisy satria atao ny aho no fitory izay tsy hinoany? Paoly apostoly dia tao aorian’ny fihana ny tamin’ny Jesosy mivantana vao sahy nanambana Azy; ka na iza na iza tsy resy lahatra amin’ny fitsanganany amin’ny maty dia tsy hanana fahasaahiana hanambana an-karihany amin’ny olona rehetra fa nitsangana tamin’ny maty tokoa Jesosy Kristy . Maro amintsika ankehiriny koa no mbohita voafototry ny tahotra sy ny tsy finoana ka tsy ho sahy ny hitory ny tenin’Andriamanitana. Anisan’ny mamatomatra antsika amin’izany koa ny fomba amam-panao, ary tsy izany indrindra ve no mbohita maha voafototra ny vehivavy teolozijina amin’ny tsy aATO ordinasiona, fa tsy mpitana hazomanga ny vehivavy araka ny fomba amam-panao sady tsy mipisorona?


Dia ho voninahitr’Andriamanititra ireto ihany anie izany rehetra izany ary ho fiadanana sy fifialiana ho an’izay mino sy mandray izany. Amen.
Declaration

I, Kevin A. Ogilvie, PhD candidate, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Faculty of Humanities, Religion and Social Sciences, School of Religion and Theology, hereby declare that unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, this thesis is my own original work and shall only be submitted for the purposes of the above mentioned degree.

[Signature]
Kevin Ahnfeldt Ogilvie

[Date]
February 9, 2011

As the supervisor, I hereby approve this thesis for submission

[Signature]
Professor Jonathan Draper

[Date]
February 10, 2011

(with corrections)

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