

LWML SOUTH DAKOTA DISTRICT MISSION GRANT INFORMATION PAPER

Name of Project: Lutheran Bible Books for Madagascar (Africa)
Amount of Proposal: \$5,000

Party Responsible for Implementing/Administering Funds:

Jeff Rahn, LHF Assistant Executive Director
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Party with Special Knowledge of the Grant:

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Rev. Dr. Matthew Heise, LHF Executive Director

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Signature of Support from LCMS Michigan District President:



*Rev. David Davis, LCMS Michigan District President
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The Need/Extending the Ministry of the Word:

Off the east coast of the African continent lies the world's 4th largest island, a nation called Madagascar that is home to more than 29 million people. Many Americans might know Madagascar for its unique flora and fauna (including the curious lemurs) and for the wonderful vanilla beans they export, but within the LCMS, many people are beginning to hear about our

Lutheran brothers and sisters in Christ who make up the Malagasy Lutheran Church (FLM). The Malagasy Lutheran Church is one of the largest and fastest growing Lutheran church bodies in the world with more than 4 million baptized members within its 8,500+ congregations. The LCMS has been in talks with the FLM for nearly 20 years, and in 2018, FLM leadership expressed a desire to seek fellowship with the LCMS.

While that goal has not yet been attained, the LCMS is continuing to provide theological education support so that FLM pastors – and their congregations – can have a firmer foundation in Lutheran teaching and practice. To this end, a challenge arises: key books of Lutheran doctrine and teaching are lacking in the Malagasy language, from Luther's *Small Catechism* to children's books like *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* to the *Book of Concord*. The LCMS regional director for Africa, Rev. Shauen Trump, has asked the Lutheran Heritage Foundation (LHF), with its long and proven track record of Lutheran translation, to assist in bringing these important books of the faith to the Malagasy Lutheran Church. To accomplish this task of providing our good Lutheran books not only for pastors and seminarians, but also the many children and families of FLM congregations, LHF needs the help of the LWML South Dakota District's mighty mites!

Of top priority is providing books that share the Good News – and our good Lutheran teachings – at the most basic, beginner levels. Books like *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* and *Luther's Small Catechism* are badly needed to teach the faith to the FLM's tens of thousands of families and hundreds of thousands of children. Smaller booklets, like "Jesus Never Fails," are also badly needed for evangelism and for providing spiritual comfort and strength for believers.

"In Africa, books continue to be important resources for the body of Christ, from church president to newly baptized child," said Rev. Trump. "The simplest presentations of Jesus Christ in children's books provide the text for sharing the Gospel with those who have not yet heard." This is especially true in Madagascar, where adult literacy levels are much lower than here in the United States. Only about 76 percent of children attend primary school, and of those students, only 56 percent graduate and go on to secondary school. Among children aged 7 to 14 who attend school, only 23 percent possess basic skills in reading. This means that books that introduce people to Jesus in a simple but complete way are essential.

As children and adults alike read and benefit from the Bible storybooks and catechisms, growing in their Christian faith, their newfound knowledge enables them to "winsomely engage their community, telling people about Jesus, sharing their faith, and loving their neighbor," said Rev. Trump.

"Books are very welcome and used in the Malagasy culture," said Rev. Dr. Dinku Bato, LHF's project coordinator for Africa. "When you distribute, people will take them and read them. It is a very good way to spread God's Word and strengthen people's faith."

Budget Information:

The Lutheran Heritage Foundation requests the LWML South Dakota District to prayerfully consider becoming a partner in **A Lutheran Foundation for Madagascar** by approving the sum of \$5,000 at their 2026 Convention. At a cost of just \$0.50 - \$4 per book,

this funding would approximately cover the costs of printing anywhere from 1,250 to 10,000 copies of *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*, *Luther's Small Catechism* or "Jesus Never Fails" in the Malagasy language.

Translation work has already been completed on these projects and can proceed to printing as soon as funding is received. If awarded this grant, the LWML South Dakota District's funds will go toward the printing costs of whichever translation project (listed below) is of higher priority in the mission field. At this time, no other sources of funding have been acquired for LHF's translation work in Madagascar; any remaining project expenses will be covered through contributions from individuals, congregations, church organizations and foundations (LHF's general fund).

"A Lutheran Foundation for Madagascar" Budget

DESCRIPTION OF ITEM	COST
"Jesus Never Fails" evangelism/devotion booklet (10,000 copies at 50 cents per copy)	\$5,000
<i>Small Catechism</i> booklet – 6 Chief Parts only	
Copyright	\$600
Printing (5,000 copies at \$1 per copy)	\$5,000
<i>A Child's Garden of Bible Stories</i>	
Copyright	\$600
Printing (3,000 copies at \$4/book)	\$12,000
<i>Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation</i>	
Copyright	\$600
Printing (5,000 copies at \$3/book)	\$15,000

Accountability and Sustainability:

The Lutheran Heritage Foundation (a recognized service organization of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, endorsed by the LCMS Board for Mission Services) has been translating and publishing Lutheran books and materials for over 30 years. Throughout that time, the organization has experimented, developed, modified and improved different strategies to find qualified translators, print at low costs, and distribute literature with the life-giving Word of God.

In our world, we've seen that political, social and economic issues may force missionaries to come and go to an area. We also know that new immigrants may relocate multiple times before permanently settling in a place, making it difficult for churches to establish long-term relationships with them. But the Lutheran books they've been given travel with these families, teaching about the love of Christ for generations to come.

LWML South Dakota District: Mission Grant Proposal for 2026-2028
A Lutheran Foundation for Madagascar (Africa) – \$5,000

Whereas, “all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,” (2 Timothy 3:16); and

Whereas, there are more than 4 million baptized Lutherans in the Malagasy Lutheran Church (FLM) on the island nation of Madagascar in Africa; and

Whereas, the lack of access to education has led to lower literacy levels among the Malagasy people (with only 43% of the population attending high school); and

Whereas, Malagasy pastors and families have little or no access to our good Lutheran books (including easy-to-read and understand books like the *Small Catechism* and *A Child’s Garden of Bible Stories*) written in their own language; and

Whereas, LCMS missionaries have requested the assistance of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation to translate and publish these important Lutheran materials for the churches and families in Madagascar; therefore be it

Resolved, that the LWML South Dakota District assembled in its 2026 Convention will vote the sum of \$5,000 to go to the Lutheran Heritage Foundation to help build a Lutheran foundation for the country of Madagascar through translations of the books of our faith.

LWML South Dakota District: Mission Grant Proposal for 2026-2028
A Lutheran Foundation for Madagascar - Photos & Captions



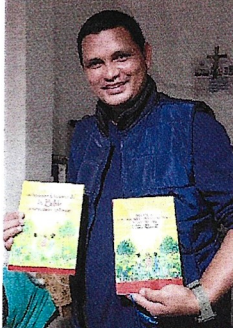
LHF Photo 1: Far across the Atlantic Oceans lies the 4th largest island nation in the world, Madagascar, which you may know for their incredible wildlife and vanilla beans – or maybe for a movie your kids loved by the same name.



LHF Photo 2: On that same island of 29 million people is the Malagasy Lutheran Church (FLM), a church body of more than 4 million men, women and children – lots of children!



LHF Photo 3: LCMS missionaries have asked the Lutheran Heritage Foundation to help translate and publish some of the good books of our Lutheran faith into the Malagasy language.



LHF Photo 4: Easy-to-read books like *Luther's Small Catechism* and "Jesus Never Fails" are vital since many Malagasy people don't have strong reading skills. In fact, a child's Bible book like *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* is often a great way for adults to be introduced to Jesus!



LHF Photo 5: At a cost of just 50 cents to \$4 per book, this \$5,000 mission grant for "A Lutheran Foundation for Madagascar" will have a great impact, sharing the Good News with anywhere from 1,250 to 10,000 people!