

# International Ministry, Bible Schools and Seminaries

## Nina's Story

In Madagascar, we are leading the way in ordaining women for ministry in the Church of the Nazarene.

Nina Rakotomanana was introduced to Jesus Christ and, in turn, the Church of the Nazarene through a leader who held a Bible study in her community in 1997. During one of the studies, the leader invited people to accept Christ. Nina felt the urging of the Spirit, went forward, and gave her life to Christ.

In 2000, she heard the Lord call her to teach Sunday School. She also felt that she needed to start a Bible study in her community and in another community in Antananarivo. In July of that year, she heard the Lord clearly tell her that she needed to start a church. This was the start of her call into ministry. With the full support of her husband, Marcel, who was also a new Christian, Nina became a pastor and began studying for ordination through the Institut Théologique Nazaréen.

Nina also works five days a week at the Street Kids Center. While she has many responsibilities, one of her main jobs at the Center is to take sick children to the hospital and be sure that the money allotted to them is spent on medical care. Nina is very careful the money is used correctly. She has always been a hard worker and dedicated to her work at the Center, but mainly to winning people to Christ and starting new churches.

On March 10, General Superintendent Stan Toler ordained Nina Rakotomanana as an elder in the Church of the Nazarene. For Nina, this means that she is now set apart wholly for the work of Christ and to only be used by Him.

In Madagascar there is a very traditional mindset about women in ministry. For the older Malagasies, it is not "normal" for a woman to be a pastor. That role is considered one for men. In spite of this mindset, Nina says her greatest challenge "is to fulfill the mission of the Lord as stated in Matthew 28:19-20, until the end of my days. Growing the kingdom of God is my greatest challenge."

When looking for inspiration and encouragement, Nina says that she looks to the story of Gideon and Judges 6:12. "Gideon had great fear," she says, "And I was also scared that I will not be able to be a pastor because I am female. But God encouraged me, so I continue to share God's Word."

Nina pastors a church about an hour's bus ride and a 15-minute walk from her house. She also leads a Bible study in the community where she lives in hopes of starting a new church there one day soon. She has a passion for church growth and also to see people enter into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. She, her husband, Marcel, and their two daughters, Antsa and Iobe (U-be), are working hard in the church Nina pastors to show Christ's love.

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