

MISSIONARY MOMENTS

“Shocking the ladies”

When I was a new missionary in Madagascar, I invited two ladies to come visit. When they came, I served them juice and biscuits after they sat down, and they seemed very surprised, looking at each other with wonderment. They were reluctant to drink, and waited until after I started drinking to take their juice. When our visit was over, I hugged them as they went out and they looked so shocked. I wondered if I had done something wrong.

Later, when I visited a Malagasy home, I waited a long time, thirsty, before I finally asked for a drink. Apparently, in that culture you are not offered anything until you ask for it, and the ladies who visited me were surprised they were given something before they asked for it. They also do not hug, but rather kiss each other on the cheek three times.

Since we are both Africans, I was really taken aback by these cultural differences and had to learn to do it like them!

- South African missionary to Madagascar

PUBLISHED ON 11 MARCH, 2024