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THE SCHLEHLEINS

Missionaries to the Tsongas of South Africa

MALAWI'S BERLIN WALL

Overviewing My 2nd Trip to the Yawo in Mangochi, Malawi

In late July I returned to Malawi for another two-week survey trip among the Yawo Muslims. I stayed in the northeastern tip of the Mangochi District called Lulanga.

OBSERVATIONS

For three decades starting in the 1960s, the Berlin Wall separated Germany. The heavily guarded concrete barrier divided communist, poor and oppressed East Germany from capitalist, wealthy and free West Germany.

A West German could easily peer over the barricade and see a neighbor of the same race, heritage and language living in starkly different circumstances in East Germany.

Malawi, too, has a Berlin Wall. It's called Lake Malawi. The country borders only the western side of this massive inland sea, except for a little sliver where I went—a peninsula—bordering the southeastern part of the lake.

On a clear morning one can gaze across the lake and see the other side, just 25 kilometers across.

On the east is Lulanga where there is no electricity, no English, and a mostly Muslim population. In the west, though still poor, one finds tar roads, power lines, English, churches and infrastructure.

LESSON LEARNED

Need and difficulty go hand in hand. Why is it that a large percentage of Malawi is "Christian" but the vast majority of the 2.5 million Yawo in Malawi are Muslim? The reason is that it is difficult for missionaries to reach them physically (the Lake), comfortably (no electricity), academically (no high schools), relationally (a resistant culture), intellectually (no English), emotionally (small missionary presence), efficiently (bad roads), financially (few shops), and spiritually (strongly Muslim).

This area needs missionaries but not just any will do. We need those that will resist the gravitational pull of ease and comfort and are willing to sacrifice much and do hard things for Christ's glory.

PRAISES

There is much be thankful for regarding the gospel work among the Yawo people.

1. Though most Yawo also speak Chichewa (the official language of Malawi), there are good Bible translations in both Chichewa and Chiyao.
2. There exists a lengthy history of good missionary work among the Yawo, especially around the area of Mangochi Town, far to the south of Lulanga.
3. The Lord blessed me with an excellent contact in the region, a pastor also named Paul. He is Yawo, but is also fluent in Chichewa and English. He loves his Bible, he works hard, his family is in order, he preaches the pure gospel and has a good sense of humor. We walked and motor biked dozens of miles surveying the area and visiting the small churches in the district. He was the highlight of the trip.

PRAY

1. That the Lord would send missionaries to the Yawo people in this region.
2. That the Lord would continue to open doors for us and that we would have the courage to walk through.

Cordially in Christ,
Paul & Lindy
Audrey, Nate, Lawson, Owen, Julianna, Clara, Luke & Katie

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