

My second week in Malawi began with the car breaking down and having to wait while another car was prepared. The brushes on the starter motor were worn out and the muffler pipe had been bent while on the dirt roads and was nearly completely closed. This put us behind, so by the time I drove over to pick up my translator, William, stop at the bookstore to purchase 500 hymn books, and drive to Salima, it was after noon. The people were concerned that they would not get as much time as they had hoped for in classes so we promised to teach late into the day. I have been very pleased with the intense interest of these people. As I watch their eyes and faces, they are receptive and interested throughout the lessons. Salima is by Lake Malawi, and is generally very hot. That's why I asked to do Salima and Nkhota-kota as early as possible. Fortunately the weather is unseasonably cool, so it was only uncomfortable and not unbearable.

We taught till about 5:30 and drove back to the home of a school teacher. His home was provided by the school. We went into the bedroom to find beds instead of mats. Trouble was the foam was so thin you could feel the boards. There were many small cockroaches running around the bed, but that is just part of Malawi. Every home has their own bugs. We stayed two nights in this home, and a few days later found the cockroaches when I unrolled the mosquito net to set up at the next home, but I counted myself lucky because William had fleas in his net! He had picked up fleas in the same bedroom I got the roaches. Like everything else in Malawi these were super sized, about the size of a popcorn kernel cut in half. He had feasted on William. I had been bitten a few times that night with a stronger itch than I usually felt with mosquitos, but I just figured it was a different mosquito, this was my first encounter with fleas, but William said there were many in Malawi.

The next two days were spent in Salima at two other congregations in the area. I am getting into a routine. The elders in most churches want a lesson on Christian living, emphasizing morality, a class on the difference in the church of Christ and the denominations, the role of women in the church, giving, and the relationship of husbands and wives in the family. Depending on the church and the distances others have walked to get there, they will end the lessons between three to five. We then drive to the next congregation either that night or the next morning.

Thursday was to be my day off, but I spent the morning writing a report and gathering supplies. I picked up William about 1:30 and we went to pick up the rest of the hymn books and some other supplies and started the 3.5 hour drive to Nkhota Kota. Once again we had to drive at night. Because of the windshields being scratched due to the washing off the sand with a washcloth, every car tends to blind you. Add to this the fact that most cars in Malawi have their lights pointed in many different directions(including the eyes of the oncoming driver) and that some do not dim their high beams, I find I have to slow down to a crawl as each car passes. I also slow down on the curves because you never know what is around the bend. This time it may have saved our lives as we came around the corner to find a semi truck in our lane moving toward us. I was able to slow down and get out of his way as he slowly moved into his lane. After my heart slowed down, we continued our journey arriving about 8:00 pm.

The first congregation in Nkhota Kota was far from the main road taking about an hour and a half. We were rewarded with a large crowd who could not fit in the building so we taught outside. We ended the classes about 4:00 pm and began the drive back. We had picked up one of the original preachers in Malawi who appeared worn out at the age of 70. Instead of just dropping him to walk home we drove the additional 10 Kilometers on poor roads to take him home, for which he was very grateful. But it kept us from getting home till nearly 8:00. Once again on the way home driving in the dark nearly caused another accident. This time as the car passed me and I slowed, I saw someone walking in the other lane. There was something just enough unusual that I continued to watch him and concluded he was drunk. He staggered right in front of the car and we nearly hit him.

We then drove to Dwangwa for a Saturday-Sunday meeting. As soon as we arrived(about 10:00) we started lessons for the day. These people were very eager and wanted more and more classes. We taught until 9:00pm and then they wanted to ask questions, I was beginning to think I would be prolonging my speech until midnight, but we finished about 10:30 with the promise of beginning again at 7:30 in the morning. The elders had reserved a rest house(motel) for us to sleep in that night. Rest houses in Malawi vary from cheap accommodations next to a bottle store(bar) and very loud music to expensive places along the lakeshore that mimic what we have in the states. I had no illusions that it would be on the high end, just wondered how low it would be. I have slept in the cheapest ones in Harare, Zimbabwe and in Malawi and also in the most expensive. This one was down at the lower end, but not the lowest. There were two beds and three of us, so I booked another room for the third man at 2,500 Kwacha(\$6.00). After a cold shower(no hot water in the evening) and a good night's sleep, I bought breakfast for us, consisting of 2 eggs, chips(french fries), toast, and hot water with tea bags for 1,000 kwacha(\$2.50) each. We arrived at the building at 7:30 and began teaching until noon, then took the Lord's supper and giving and broke off. After lunch we took the drive back to Nkhota-kota, arriving at 4:00. We then began the journey back to Lilongwe, the last hour was in the dark and once again, I had a problem. This time it was a stalled semi truck blocking our lane, that I caught sight of at the last second and moved aside.

As you can see, I need your prayers for safety. I thank God that we have narrowly avoided so many dangers in this last week. I have included a few pictures in an attachment so you can again get an idea of the conditions here.