



The Malawi Project

About Malawi

The Warm Heart of Africa

Life a world away

Tucked deep in sub-Saharan Africa is the tiny nation of Malawi. It is unknown to many in the west. However, with the advent of cell phones, television, and the computer, a window is opening. What is being discovered? It is a world beyond their experience, remote in historic perspective, diverse in cultural background, and rich in history.

In the 14th and 15th century the Chewa Tribe migrated to the region to escape wars, famines and other disruptions. By the 16th century they were known as the Maravi Empire. At its peak the empire extended over most of present day Malawi, fully one third of Zambia, almost the entirety of modern day Mozambique, and a portion of today's nation of Zimbabwe.

Slavery then entered through Portuguese traders searching for gold. It spread up and down both the coasts of the continent. In the west slaves were sent to the Americas, and in the east the Arabs and Indians purchasing the slaves.

Explorer and missionary David Livingstone entered the Lower Shire Valley in 1859, opening the door to Protestant missionaries. His efforts led to the end of slavery, but another dark cloud loomed on the horizon. Slavery was replaced by colonialism, when in 1884 the major European powers gathered in Berlin to carve up the continent. Britain, Germany and Portugal gained power in the south and east, France would take the west and north, and Belgium took over the Congo.

Nyasaland was established as a British Protectorate in 1891. It incorporated part of the former Marvai state. This British possession included portions of the Chewa, Lomwe, Yao, Ngoni, and Tumbuka.

In 1964 Nyasaland gained its independence as the nation of Malawi. Single party rule under President Hastings Kamuzu Banda was maintained until 1994, with Banda aligning his people with the west during the cold war. Malawi was recognized as one of the most pro-western nations in Africa, and today is referred to as "the warm heart of Africa."



In 1994 a multi-party system was established, and a new constitution put into place. The central government has a President and Parliament; both selected by the people in general elections. The third branch is the judicial and it is independent of the executive and legislative branches.

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For more information about the nation of Malawi, go to: www.malawiproject.org
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