

Volker and JinHyeog Glissmann

Location: **Blantyre, MALAWI**

Mission: **Theological education**



The Glissmanns are living in Malawi. Jinhyeog is involved in a local Primary School as a music teacher. Volker works off-campus as a programme developer for TEEC, the Theological Education by Extension College in Johannesburg, South Africa, and does grassroots theological training in Malawi.



International Bible College Berea (IBCB), Blantyre

The week before last, I sat down with a friend I have known for many years to chat about what I actually do in Malawi. He is a "retired" missionary back in Malawi for a short visit to the theological College he helped set up and develop in Blantyre. Our conversation was prompted by a discussion about creating a theological curriculum we had a month before.

What is so interesting about the conversation is that I am mostly involved in non-accredited grassroots theological education here in Malawi, while for my South African work, I am concentrating on university-level training. Here in Malawi, the focus is on grassroots training, while in South Africa, the focus is on a government-accredited framework for theological courses, out of which we develop appropriate university-level training. But my friend works with pastors with limited secondary school education (many of whom prefer training in the vernacular, Chichewa). Here in Malawi, we have been experimenting for a few years with a course

design that is nearly entirely based on the biblical story and answers to questions that are raised when we read the stories here in Malawi while at the same time guiding the students to a deeper appreciation of the overall story of God. At the end of our discussion and the explanations, my visitor was very excited and wanted to replace their Old Testament survey course (which he described as a course that only scratches the surface of biblical stories).

Then, we had another meeting with the principal of the International Bible College Berea (IBCB), Blantyre, last week. We further discussed the possibility of using Knowing God, our discussion-based Old Testament course, as a substitute for their residential ministry training Old Testament course. Interestingly, the principal also valued our approach not to lecture but to use home-study workbooks followed by discussion. That will make all the difference to the learners. We will arrange a few test lessons for the College to understand the course better, before we run it. This is a very unexpected but exciting development as the biblical-story-based grassroots material is much better suited for the learners at the College. The icing on the cake is that we were just about to start the translation project of Knowing God and Knowing Jesus into Chichewa. Hopefully, we can use the new translations already when we start training.

Prayer Points

- Give thanks to God for opening an unexpected door for one of our courses.
- Pray for us the discussions and the test run so that we can fine-tune the material to the needs of the pastors in training. Pray also for the translation project.
- Please continue to pray for the health and safety of the whole family, especially during this time of transition.