

MISSIONARY MOMENTS

“What’s in the pot?”

My family and I had been on the missionary journey for less than a year. We were headed to India, and had come from Malawi, where the idea of Frontier Missions isn’t as embedded compared to other countries. With Malawi being a developing country, we had better chances of raising support in South Africa.

While living in Durban in South Africa, we were invited by a lady from church to have lunch at their house. She specifically asked if we had tried crabs before, (which we hadn’t), and if we would like to try. As a family, we chorused a yes! Afterwards, we proceeded to ask each other what she meant by that, because we had never eaten it, much less heard about it. Lunch day came and we arrived at the kind lady’s home, excited to try whatever it was.

What caught me first was the fragrance; I couldn’t put my finger on it, it smelled like a condiment we sometimes used back home when cooking dry leaf okra, and it’s sometimes made of ash, which was probably the first red flag, but I kept quiet. Then, the big pot came on the table, and she invited us around it to see how beautiful it looked, and show us how to eat it. She took off the lid and we all jumped (quite visibly, if I may add) and exclaimed, “Oh! Nkhanu!” (meaning crabs in our vernacular).

It dawned on us what it was, and that we just don’t eat it back home. We had never even tried it. The sweet lady was concerned, but again we expressed enthusiasm and said we would try it. Well, all new things have a beginning - our kids went on to try and love it, and my husband and I went on to try it. 😊

This was the first of many cultural shocks we would meet, laugh about, and learn to adjust to - but after that day, we certainly always asked what something was before agreeing to try it!

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