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RAFIKI FOUNDATION MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER



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Missionary #263

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Dear friends and family,

Much has happened in the short time since our first newsletter went out.

We attended Survival Camp in Eustis Florida at the Rafiki Foundation headquarters. During our training we spent many hours with Karen Elliott (Executive Director) and Erica Robertson (Director of Africa Operations) discussing the various facets of the ministry and the part we will play. We are so thankful to both of them, and all the Home Office staff, for the training and encouragement. The experience was uplifting and challenging, as the schedule was packed. The campus is beautiful and is built to mimic a typical African Rafiki Village. We stayed in the 3-bedroom guest house that is very similar to the house we will use in Rwanda.

While there, we were commissioned as Rafiki missionaries, charged to move forward in service to the Lord, and in service of the mission of Rafiki. But to back up a bit, many of you are asking us; what is Rafiki?

Rafiki Foundation has 6 programs in Africa. Childcare, Schools, Widows, Bible Study, Teacher Training (RICE), and Outreach. We will be involved in all 6 of these areas, but the primary focus will be on education. Since 1985, the vision of the Rafiki Foundation has been to cultivate a multitude of godly contributors in Africa through Bible study and classical Christian education.

We are slated to work in Rwanda, in the Rafiki Village on the outskirts of the capital city, Kigali. The Village is comprised of a school with over 430 K-12 students, a one-year teacher training program, an outreach program, and a widow's program. There are currently 4 missionaries in the Village. One is leaving in May, so when Lorri and I arrive there will be 5 full-time missionaries onsite, overseeing the work there. The Village employees roughly 75 Rwandans as teachers and lead teachers, cooks, guards, cleaning staff, grounds keepers, and several other functions. Previously the Village was also an orphanage, but that is coming to an end as it has been many years since new orphans were taken in and the last group of high school seniors from the orphanage are about to graduate. Many years ago the Rwandan government closed down all orphanages, but we were able to continue to raise the children already there above a certain age.

As I mentioned last time, my (Steve's) position will be Village Administrator. Now that we've done the training I have a much more detailed view of that work. I will oversee the operations of the Village and

all its staff and be accountable for the health and outcomes of the various ministries. I will also be responsible for overseeing the operation of the Village, from building maintenance to finance and payroll, HR, and governmental compliance. It is a big job, and I am filling very large shoes, taking over for Mike Koch who is moving on from that role after 14 years. In fact, Rafiki has been praying for a replacement for Mike for more than 18 months now.

Lorri's position will be RICE Dean. RICE (Rafiki Institute for Classical Education) is the teacher training program, and most of the 10 Villages have a RICE Program, including Rwanda.

RICE Purpose: Rafiki adopted classical Christian education because it guides young students to reach their God-given potential and grow in wisdom and virtue. The Rafiki Classical Christian Curriculum adopts a biblical worldview and applies this lens to the various subjects in the curriculum. The Post-Graduate Studies program (that Lorri will be overseeing in Rwanda) trains credentialed educators to teach in a way that shapes their students' hearts and minds to see the world around them as God sees the world so that the culture is impacted to the glory of God.

God has been moving quickly and powerfully to allow us to be in Rwanda soon. The school term starts at the beginning of August and we plan to be there! That means our house needs to sell (which is well underway), and we need to raise our support. We should be at least 50-60% funded before we leave, and we are just getting started. Several of you have already committed to providing support, and that is wonderful! As the Lord leads, you can become a sponsor via this link: <https://rafikifoundation.org/missionary-detail/stephen-and-lorri-blum-263>. We are humbled by the encouraging conversations we've had with many of you already and look forward to what lies ahead!

Love in Christ,

Steve and Lorri

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With Executive Director Karen Elliott after being commissioned.