



# Rafiki Foundation, Inc.

## Missionary Newsletter

December 2014 – Carolyn and Doug Koepke

***"After they (the Magi) had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh"***  
(Matthew 2:9-11 NIV).

### Our First Christmas in Nigeria!

We asked the children to describe a typical Christmas at Rafiki Village Nigeria and this is what they told us.

On December 1 there is a tree lighting ceremony. Christmas hymns are sung and each family places decorations on the tree while sharing the meaning behind the decorations. In preparation for the tree lighting, the children decorate the dining hall with sashes of beautiful purple and white cloth. The color purple represents the royal birth of Jesus Christ our King. White represents the holiness of God our Savior's redemptive work on the cross, washing us clean as snow. On Christmas Eve they invite neighbors to a program of nine lessons and carols. On Christmas Day everyone goes to church in new Christmas clothes, then enjoys a special meal, and plays games around the Village. The day after Christmas is "Boxing Day" when the children open their gifts and present a Christmas play. On New Year's Eve we will gather around a bonfire to sing hymns and offer thanks to the Lord for seeing us through another year and to pray for the upcoming year. It's a sweet time for the Rafiki families.



Team member Melanie helps decorate the tree

This year Rafiki Village Nigeria also celebrates as our first children graduate from high school. What an accomplishment for them and confirmation of God's goodness to all of us! We're new to this Village but are grateful to help reap the harvest from seeds sown by those who served here before us. Many Rafiki Missionaries and MiniMissionaries have worked together over the years to make this a safe place to raise God-worshiping children, who have the privilege to study His Word daily. It doesn't get much better than that! Thank you to all of you who stand with us with prayer and finances. Together, we have witnessed children in Kenya, Rwanda, and now Nigeria giving their hearts to Christ and learning to put God's Word to work in their everyday lives.

Some of you have asked what Rafiki children will do after graduating from high school. The plan has been to see our graduates go to university, trade school, or find employment and reintegrate back into their community as Christian contributors. In God's goodness, the Rafiki Institute of Classical Education (RICE) program is being developed as the final step in the education that Rafiki provides in Africa. As the orphans grow up in Rafiki Villages they are given a Christian classical education. Our graduates who qualify for advanced learning will have an opportunity to attend RICE. After completing RICE, they are qualified to teach in Rafiki's preschool or start a preschool in their local community.

We are thankful for all of you who have been praying for Sarah. We are happy to report that her condition has improved. We are also thankful for the opportunity to spend time with family in the U.S. for the first few weeks of December.

Another sign of God's perfect provision is the timing of this U.S. visit. As we returned to the U.S., we were permitted to bring four footlockers of widows product back for the Rafiki Exchange, just in time for Christmas. It is rather amazing to see the quality of products that these widows produce. Whether you are interested in purchasing Christmas presents from Africa or simply enjoy window-shopping, **store.rafikifoundation.org** is an excellent place to shop.

In God's perfect timing, He allowed us to spend three months in Nigeria, get involved in everyday life, figure out what items are needed from the U.S. to repair equipment there, and get it all packed up in time to return before Christmas Day.

As we all prepare to celebrate the advent of our Lord Jesus, we pray that His light will shine in and through every one of His people. May those who are still searching see our God so wondrously evident in us that they will open their hearts and find the peace that is found only in Him during this Christmas season.

Love,

*Doug, Carolyn & Sarah*

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