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RAFIKI FOUNDATION MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER



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*“and you will be dragged
before governors and
kings for my sake, to bear
witness before them and the
Gentiles” (Matthew 10:18).*

Dear friends and family,

I have been pondering this verse in the last couple of months. Here, Jesus is sending out His disciples to proclaim the kingdom of heaven, and He instructs them how to go (leave possessions behind, live simply, charge no money, etc.) and warns them that they will be often hated and even persecuted. Some translations say that they will “be dragged before governors and kings”—under arrest, is the implication. I am grateful that this type of persecution is not my current context, but the principle is that the Lord often sends His people to proclaim the gospel in situations that seem daunting and utterly beyond them. That has felt relevant lately!

The Scriptures are full of figures who are reluctant or seemingly unqualified for the task the Lord sets before them: Jacob, a deceitful younger son who became the father of the twelve tribes; Joseph, a slave raised to dizzying heights of power in Egypt; Moses, who begged God not to send him to Pharaoh and several times says “this people [Israel] is too much for me”; David, a young shepherd boy sent to face kings and giants; and of course, the apostles, who were very average, “blue collar” working men, but were sent to all the world, including many important political arenas. I wonder if they ever stood in front of the crowds or governors and thought, “I can’t believe this is happening; I could never have dreamed of this!” Although my experiences are on a much smaller scale, I have had those flashes during some recent moments.

The first was when our Home Office team came to visit the Village in February. They brought some “VIP” guests with them, including a board member and some new friends of Rafiki who had recently begun supporting our work and wanted to see it in action on the ground. Also along for the ride was Dr. Tim Dernlan, the vice president of the Association of Classical and Christian Schools. It was a joy to show these friends around, get to know them a little, and receive their encouragement.

I couldn’t help but wonder, “in what other context would I and these students and teachers have had the opportunity to spend such quality and focused time with the ACCS VP?” What a privilege!



The Home Office with our special guests from the CCAP and other local church leaders.

During that same visit, the school put on a recitation event for the Home Office and some of our Malawian partners, including some of the leaders of the Presbyterian denomination (CCAP) and its university, University of Livingstonia (UNILIA). They loved the presentations, and even came to the front to speak to our youngest ones and exhort them to appreciate the educational opportunity they had at Rafiki. And after being especially impressed by our girls choir, they invited them to come to the university graduation the next day to sing during the ceremony. Early the next morning, we were packing into a bus and fighting through intense traffic to be dropped off by the stage. We found that there were thousands of people in the building, velvet upholstered chairs on the stage, and armed guards searching everyone. That's right, along with all the heads of UNILIA and the CCAP, the president and first lady of Malawi was coming to the event, along with several other ministers. And there were we, one conspicuous mzungu (white person) and nine high school girls plopped near the front with all eyes trained on us as we sang an arrangement of "Amazing Grace." The situation was nothing like I would have planned or preferred, but nonetheless, the Lord had placed us "before governors and kings." The girls sang well, and I hope that we were Christ-honoring witnesses!



Dr. Dernlan having a few words with some of our senior boys.



The girls choir smiling and relieved after singing well at the commencement ceremony.

Shortly after that, I received a visit from the principal of one of the UNILIA campuses, Mr. Flemings Nkhandwe, who has been a friend and help to us as we are making our way through the national accreditation process with our teachers' college (RICE). This is a long and tedious and uncertain process, especially since our vision of classical Christian education does not fit all the "boxes" that the National Council of Higher Education is used to checking. When we had a three-day accreditation visit from them last year, they did not approve our application immediately, largely because they could not understand why our curriculum and program was so different from the norm. But lo and behold! A new minister of education had come into office, and he was inquiring about this thing called classical Christian education. He had heard of Rafiki and wanted someone to come and explain



Meeting with Mr. Nkhandwe to discuss classical philosophy and a presentation to the minister of education.

Prayer Requests

- *That the Lord will bring fruit from all of these amazing opportunities and relationships that He is giving Rafiki Malawi in the these past months – more visibility and support for Rafiki throughout the American classical school movement, fruitful relationships with Ligonier and other ministries in the States, favor within the Malawian government, and an accelerated accreditation process for our teachers' college*
- *For our teachers and students to be filled with joy and determination to do all things excellently as we begin our third and final school term on April 17 – and especially for our seniors as they prepare for their final national exams, which determine so much of their vocational futures*

the philosophy to him. So Mr. Nkhandwe came to visit me and Maureen Richards, asking what books he himself should read, and requesting that I edit a presentation about classical Christian philosophy so that he could show it to the minister. What an exciting task! Again, I thought, “who could have ever predicted that I would be sitting with the head of a major university prepping him for a meeting with the education minister of an entire country?”

At the end of March, as a result of those interactions, the minister sent several deputies to visit the campus—they saw the teachers’ college and the school, interviewed some teachers, and observed our end-of-term recitation program. They were very impressed, especially that students as young as first graders could read and solve math problems (those skills are often not achieved in government schools until fourth grade). They tell us that they would like to support our vision and mission!

Then most recently, while the Richards supervised that important campus visit, I flew back to the U.S. to attend the Ligonier conference and Rafiki’s yearly Enrichment Week. Once again, I was privileged to rub shoulders and have conversations with some of the great reformed thinkers of our day who are “influencers” in the best sense—board members of Ligonier and Rafiki, college presidents, respected theological authors, and an inspiring and influential pastor of a Kenyan church. I even ended my U.S. trip by recording a podcast with my own pastors at Independent Presbyterian Church in Savannah, Terry Johnson and Tim Shaw. Me, a podcaster? Only important people get invited to do things like that, right?



Podcasting about Rafiki in Savannah with pastors Terry Johnson and Tim Shaw.

But this is where the Lord has seen fit to place me—out of my depth in many ways, working with people and on projects that seem far “above my paygrade” and for which I feel terribly under-qualified. It all makes me increasingly aware of my smallness and the Lord’s total sovereignty over my path. He is the one placing these people, these opportunities, these moments in front of us—“bringing us before governors and kings” to be His witnesses. I must only trust His promise just a few lines later: “...do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say.” And with my students, who have just begun studying Joshua, I will recite the Lord’s words: “**Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go**” (Joshua 1:9). Even so, Lord, amen—may it be all for His glory and the spreading of His kingdom!

Love,

Anna

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