



RAFIKI

FOUNDATION
MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER

August 2021 – Anna Liebing

Dear friends and family,

Proverbs 16:9 says, “**the heart of a man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps,**” or perhaps in less elevated language, “if you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans.” The Lord is certainly impressing this truth upon me in the last several months! By His grace, I am still headed to Malawi by the end of this month, but the path towards Africa this summer has been busier and a little more twisting than I anticipated.

As I told you in my last letter, I wrapped up my school year in Savannah in May and then had a few weeks to start packing and spend time saying goodbye to friends. My families and students at Veritas were so kind and sweet in those last days that, for the first time in my teaching career, I wasn’t quite ready for school to end. My time in June with my IPC church family was also busy and bittersweet. I praise the Lord for answering prayers for time and opportunity to spend time with many people who have become so dear to me in Savannah. The evening service where the church publicly said goodbye and prayed for my going was especially wonderful.



Me and my pastor Terry Johnson the last Sunday at IPC church



The Independent Presbyterian Church of Savannah



One of the views I will miss in Savannah

I then drove to Rafiki’s Home Office in Eustis, Florida where I spent almost two weeks training at “Survival Camp” and an Enrichment conference. It was a pretty intense time physically and mentally, but it was great to spend time with the Home Office staff face to face, do more job specific training, and work alongside several other

missionaries-in-training who are on their way to the field. One of those couples was Maureen and Jay Richards, who will be going to the Village in Malawi with me. We loved getting to know each other and I think that we will be a good team, for which I am hugely grateful. However, we also found out that week that Malawi had closed their borders due to COVID concerns! It was decided that the best plan was to change our tickets and send us to the Village in Tanzania instead of waiting for the Malawi borders to open. That gave me a little bit of mental whiplash, but we all prayed and trusted it to the Lord.



My fellow missionaries-in-training with Rafiki Founder Rosemary Jensen. Maureen is first on top row and Jay is fifth in top row.

My parents came to Savannah at the beginning of July to help me move my things back to Cincinnati (special thanks to the crew from Bible study who came to help load the truck!). It was a wrench when I finally pulled out of Savannah for the last time, but there was also some level of mental relaxation in being back in Cincinnati with family after a very full few months. We had a wonderful family vacation in the mountains, but near the end of that week, my next curve ball came whizzing in.



Fun times during my family vacation in New Hampshire



Just as I was mentally gearing up for the final weeks of packing and prepping, I came down with a nasty case of COVID! At first, I worried that I might get a few days behind on my to-do lists, but I didn't feel terrible and thought I would be fine soon. After a few days, I realized that I was pretty sick, and I started worrying about basic things like keeping food down and fighting dehydration. The Lord put me flat on my back for two and a half weeks, I had to cancel my original fly date, and I was struggling to "give thanks in all things" as the fever and nausea went on day after day.

The Lord does all things well, though, does He not? And He calls us to name His blessings. I am grateful that I was still in the States with my family—including three siblings in medicine!—and had access to excellent medical care when this happened (honestly, do you ever really get over wanting your mom when you are really sick?). The Rafiki Home Office was wonderfully kind and helpful in dealing with the cancellations and changes. It was also good for me to be reminded very concretely that I am not in control, no matter how carefully I plan; that I literally rely on the Lord hour by hour, breath by breath; that I need to praise Him for that truth. The time that I have had to spend at home quietly recovering and rebuilding my stamina has provided a spiritual and mental respite that I would not have otherwise had—opportunity to pray and dwell on His Word

and these truths at some length. Finally, I was made very gratefully aware of how many people were praying for me. I feel almost palpably upheld and peaceful in the midst of a complication that could be seen as “stressful.”

And wouldn't you know, just as I began to discuss re-booking flights with Rafiki, we received our specially requested visa permits to enter Malawi, so now I will be able to fly straight there. My new departure date—Lord willing—is August 27. The Richards will already be there when I arrive, and we will spend some time getting adjusted and oriented, and then get to work preparing for the new school year, which is scheduled to start in early October.

Please pray for:

- *Full recovery of my stamina from being sick.*
- *Profitable and sweet fellowship with family and friends in my last few weeks in Cincinnati.*
- *Final packing and shipping logistics—this part of the process is what I am least comfortable with and least enjoy.*
- *The development of great love and unity and smooth working habits among the missionary team in Malawi once we are all on the ground together.*
- *The Holy Spirit's work in preparing my heart and those of the national staff and students in Malawi—for smooth adjustments, clear communication, unity of purpose, and brotherly love as we all work together.*

Thank you, dear friends, for continuing to pray for me and for Rafiki's mission to help Africans know and love our great Savior. Thank you for serving faithfully in the many different locations and ministries in which He has placed each of you. I exhort us all this week in the words of Romans 12:9-11, which I memorized every year with my students, “**Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.**” May it be so!

For His Glory,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anna".

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