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RAFIKI FOUNDATION MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER



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Dear friends and family,

We have turned the calendar page to a new year since the last time I sent a letter, so even though it is February, I wish you a Happy New Year my dear friends! I hope that your New Year's resolution was to know Christ more deeply and love him more this year—that is what we are praying for ourselves and for each person involved in the work here at Rafiki Village Malawi.

I was able to spend Christmas with my family in Cincinnati, which was a wonderful blessing—full of sweet time with family, tons of good food, and lots of cuddles with my new nephew, Samuel David! Thank you to those of you in Cincinnati who took time to see me and encourage me—it was a great mental and spiritual refreshment to be with you. But now I am back in Mzuzu, and you are here to learn (mostly) about Malawi, so for this newsletter, please take a little walk through the Village with me.

Let us start at the very beginning, near the north end of campus close to my house—the preprimary building. Here, let us stop and meet a certain little girl. She is one of our youngest students, just three years old. You would never know from her sweet smile, but she has a difficult background. Her father abandoned her family before she was born, and with very few relatives to step in and help, her mother struggles to put food on the table. Then as the rains swept in this season, her home flooded and forced the family to disperse. She is now staying for a while with our gracious head teacher so that she can continue to attend school. Her mother, tearful, explained to me how desperately she wanted her to be at Rafiki: “you are teaching them deeply, to make them wise. Rafiki students read so well, but also behave well and know much about Jesus—she must be here, madam!” Indeed, she and the other PP students are already becoming proficient at reciting catechisms and verses at morning assembly. She can tell you, “man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever,” and “go therefore, into all the world, and make disciples...” I praise the Lord that this child has been able to remain at school—in fact, I am here to take her picture so that the Home Office can put together a packet of information for a sponsor who wants to help cover her school fees. What a joyful task!



Next to the pre-primary building, we will pass by the primary building. Now it is late afternoon, and the bustle of the building shifts from the normal sounds of chanting and singing to end-of-day cleaning. This is a Tuesday, which is one of our twice-weekly cleaning days. The students pull out the mops and buckets, strip off their nice school shoes, and go to work. As the fifth graders work, I hear them singing the hymn of the week. They are trying to master the tough old English phrases of “A Mighty Fortress,” and they are so proud of themselves that they can now sing “for still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe.” They interrupt the tune, though, to call out a chorus of “good afternoon, Madam!” as I walk by. Oh, that we would all work so happily!



Once we pass out from under the eaves of the primary building, it is a bit of a trek southwards over towards RICE, the teacher’s college where my colleague, Maureen Richards, reigns supreme as RICE Dean. She, Jay (her husband and our Village Administrator), and I are meeting with our guidance team to evaluate our most recent graduates’ scholarship applications. Once the resident students have graduated from high school, they leave the Village, but they have an opportunity to apply for a Rafiki scholarship, which provides them with some funding to pursue tertiary education or vocational training, depending on what they are suited and qualified for. This type of meeting can be tough—it is a weighty thing to evaluate the combination of character, academic ability, and general aptitude of each student so that we can make recommendations about whether they should receive a scholarship and what path we should encourage. The insight of our childcare assistant, Martha, and our guidance counselors, Velepi and Salem, is invaluable. We pray, we research, we discuss, and we thank the Lord for these young men and women and the various gifts the Lord has given them. Then we trust that the Lord will provide the wisdom and resources Rafiki needs to help set them up for success and a godly impact on their nation.



Prayer Requests

- *For each child to personally know and love Jesus Christ, and for the Holy Spirit to be at work especially among our teachers and staff to provide godly, joyful examples of service to Christ.*
- *For the Home Office visit coming up at the end of the month—Home Office staff and several visitors will be with us to observe, inspect, encourage, and also network with our church partners on several different programs.*
- *For Jay, Maureen, and I as we travel back to the States at the end of March to attend the Ligonier Conference and the Rafiki Enrichment Conference in Florida—safe travels and stamina for a quick and very full trip.*

Across the road and up the hill from RICE, we finally come to the building where I spend the majority of my time—the senior secondary building. Just like every headmaster everywhere knows, a hundred tasks wait for me in my office, piled up in emails and papers and notes slipped under my door. But today, there is also something extra exciting in the corner—a suitcase that our recent visitors carried from the States. It is packed full of resources sent by my Savannah church, IPC. They let me specifically choose and order curriculum resources and Christian books, maps, and posters. I cannot wait to start using them! I will pass them out to my teachers at the next in-service, and I will especially try to entice them to take the time to read some of the great theology and devotional resources. I am so grateful when gifts like this arrive from my friends and family back home!



Now finally, come with me as I scurry so as not to be late to my own Rhetoric II class with the seniors. They are just down the hall from my office, and I love my time with them. These kids are the leaders of school and the campus, and by God's grace, they are really coming into their own this year. They must work very hard during senior year as they prepare for their daunting national exams in July. They generally gather at 6:00 a.m. for an hour of study before breakfast, then stay for an additional hour and a half after school is over to study together again. Just now, though, they are engaged in a Rhetoric debate. We have been studying forensic speeches, specifically logical proofs, so they are debating sample syllogisms. If "God is love and everyone who loves is born of God," and my friend says they are in love with a Muslim, must I conclude that I should support this relationship? It is a joy to see these young men and women at the top of the school wrestle and discuss these "real life" arguments as they apply all the knowledge and biblical worldview training they have received over many years. Like all young people, they have much to learn, but they are growing even as I watch in this moment!



These are some of the sights, sounds, and events that fill my days here at Rafiki. There is so much to do, so much to manage, so many situations that require more wisdom than I have, so many hearts and minds growing and stretching in a hundred different ways every day. Please pray Romans 12:12 with me that we will "**Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer!**"

Love,

Anna

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