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RAFIKI FOUNDATION MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER



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Missionary #253

Dear friends and family,

As I sit in JFK airport waiting for my next flight en route back to Malawi, it feels like a good time to write a newsletter. As I have been in the States the last couple of weeks, I have answered various iterations of the question, “how is it going?”, and instead of the repetition being wearisome, it was actually beneficial. With a few weeks and a few thousand miles of distance between me and the Village, I have had a good opportunity to step back a little and evaluate. It has helped me to more succinctly articulate what is going on in Rafiki Malawi, and how I am feeling about it all!

Here is the short version—ministry in Malawi is challenging, and some days are very difficult. The cultural adjustments and learning curve, while leveling off, are still significant. Staff turnover, especially in the upper school, has been stressful, and the discipline battles that come with shepherding 63 resident children can be exhausting. The Village is still short-staffed administratively, and we pray regularly for more qualified nationals and also missionaries (short- and long-term). Inflation has soared—much higher than in America, believe it or not—which is so hard on the people that we serve. And yet the Lord is good, and He is bringing forth fruit and moving the Village forward in tangible ways!

We see much progress in the behavior of many of our children who have struggled with obedience and honesty—especially with many of our young men. It is enormously encouraging to see repentance and determined change, and we continue to pray for long-term fruit of faith.

In mid-May, two young men from Gordon College, Collin and Jacob, arrived to spend over a month with us, and it was great to have a couple more “hands on deck”. Jacob spent a lot of time working on our internet set-up and our computers, Collin did some teaching and curriculum work and even some admin things, and they both dived in to help with math and science tutoring. We enjoyed having a bigger missionary fellowship, and their being here also prompted us to finally get out to the Vwaza wildlife reserve, where we saw our



Taking a break from elephant hunting for lunch

first real live hippos, elephants, and crocodiles!

The Lord has brought us several wonderful nationals to fill key staffing positions—an assistant (Gift) and a librarian (Jobbs) to help Maureen at RICE (Rafiki Institute of Classical Education—teachers college), an assistant Village Administrator (Boniface) to Jay, and a part-time assistant (Lonjezo) for me, the Headmaster. They are all godly and competent people, and we give much thanks for them and for the easing of some of the workload.

If you remember from my last newsletter, we were preparing RICE for a big accreditation visit and praying for a date, and that finally happened in early May! It was the culmination of at least 5 years of work, and it was a very busy three days as the national accreditation team was on campus. It seemed to go fairly well, but there is still some uncertainty in their understanding and evaluation of a program that trains classical Christian teachers. We are waiting to hear the decision on that—we pray for full success, but we are confident that we will at least be able to officially implement the first stage of the program.

On the school front, a few key things have been happening. By God’s grace (and the generosity of supporters), we were able to give our teachers a significant salary increase this term, and it was a huge blessing. This will help them deal with rising inflation, hopefully help to stabilize our staffing, and call our teachers to the next level of excellence. We have also implemented regular study halls for our resident students as part of giving them better study habits and skills. We saw some definite improvement at report card time, and hope that this will continue. We are also making infrastructure progress. One former cottage is being re-structured so that it can become a classroom as we move into double streaming first grade next year. White boards have just replaced blackboards in the upper school, and new printers are also on the way. These seemingly mundane things are so exciting for us—they take finances and careful strategizing, especially in Malawi, and we are so thankful to the Lord for these provisions!

And of course, as many of you know firsthand, I also was able to spend a few weeks in the States during the term break. I flew straight to Dallas to attend the Association of Classical Christian Schools (ACCS) conference, and it just bolstered my heart and mind to be among so many wonderful classical educators again—to sit in training sessions, catch up with old friends from the classical world, and also to talk to many about Rafiki’s ministry. Then it was on to the Home Office in Florida for a few days of Enrichment and then a 3-day security training. We stayed very busy during those days, but it was fortifying to have so much of the “Rafiki family” together. During that week, my



Bringing Rafiki to the ACCS conference in Dallas

Prayer Requests

- *That the economy in Malawi would stabilize and skyrocketing inflation would slow.*
- *That the Lord would bring gifted, committed teachers especially to our upper school, and one more capable national assistant for the Village Administrator.*
- *For smooth travels and fruitful time with several different short-term missionaries who will be with us through the next few months.*
- *That the Lord would raise up more missionaries—short- and long-term—to help advance this work in Malawi.*
- *That all of our residents and students would have regenerated hearts that see the truth that the Lord’s law is the path to blessing.*

parents and most of my siblings also managed to make it down to stay in the area so that I got some time with them. That, of course, refreshed and filled up my soul more than any physical rest could have. My final stop was a few days in Savannah, where I was able to visit my sending church, Independent Presbyterian Church (IPC), give an update on my work, and spend a little time with a handful of dear friends. It was lovely to be so warmly welcomed back, and I must say, it was nice to spend the 4th of the July in the good old U.S.A.

How's that for a packed newsletter? So now here I am, both giving thanks and trying to mentally gear up to jump back for the start of term four. I am excited that one of my friends from Savannah, Connie, is traveling with me to stay and work in the Village for over a month. She is a fellow classical Christian teacher, and I am so looking forward to the help and expertise that she will bring to the school during the time she's with us. Nonetheless, I am sure that the term will have many of the usual joys and challenges. The Lord never promises a smooth path for His followers. As we seek to advance His kingdom in Malawi, just as you do in your appointed places, we fight as soldiers of the cross—sometimes with tears, sometimes with laughter, always with hands lifted in prayer, and the joy of the Lord as our strength!

Love,

Anna

Anna Liebing



Giving a Rafiki Malawi update to IPC in Savannah