

MAY 2025

RAFIKI FOUNDATION MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER



Anna Liebing

PO Box 1018
Mzuzu, Malawi
EAST AFRICA

Contact information
Email:
AnnaL@RafikiFoundation.org
Missionary #253

Dear friends and family,

Most of my missionary life, just like everyone else's, consists of the mundane—figuring out how to enforce after school pick-up routines, consulting on whether it is more advisable to serve buns or porridge in the kitchen for breakfast, re-working my day when admin meetings run late, hashing out the rising costs of school supplies, deciding the eternal questions “what’s for dinner?”, and “when do I do the laundry if there is a national power outage scheduled this weekend?” Ok, maybe that last one had a distinctly Malawian flavor, but you get the idea.

I have found that I must be alert for those moments that suddenly freeze-frame some of the fruit which the Lord promises “***in due season we will reap, if we do not give up***” (Galatians 6:9). These moments are so sweet, and they help me remember the core reasons that He has placed me here. Here are a few for you to enjoy with me!

Parent Day

In February, the school held our first ever Parents’ Day event inviting parents to come and spend the morning visiting their children’s classes and meeting with the head teachers to better learn about Rafiki’s vision and curriculum. This is a very unusual thing in Malawi—most people have the mentality that it is the government’s job to educate children, and parents tend to simply send their children off to school each morning and expect them to return after X number of years “done” (i.e. prepared for an economically successful job). Most parents had never imagined a school inviting parents to the classrooms.

We therefore only expected a handful to show up, especially since it was a workday. Instead, we had almost 200 parents come! Everyone had a marvelous time—teachers and students proudly sharing their learning, parents seeing exactly what a Rafiki education looks like, and head teachers and I getting to cast vision and answer questions.



Parents eagerly packing into classrooms to watch in real time what a Rafiki classical Christian education looks like

Parent after parent thanked me for this event and for the work of the school—some with tears in their eyes. I knew it would be a golden “snapshot” memory when a mother said, “after I enrolled my daughter here, I saw a change in her within just weeks—she is calmer, happier, more confident because of the Bible training and this beautiful environment for learning.”

Please keep praying for so many families who want their children here, but struggle to pay even the very low school fees in a wildly uncertain and inflationary economy. We need more donors to support day students so that we can offer this education at the lowest possible tuition, and give financial help on occasions when a student’s family is in dire need.

RICE

Since the last time I wrote, our newly registered Teacher Training College has officially opened with its first little cohort of twelve students! As you might expect when you are trying to bring two established institutions together, meet highly bureaucratic national standards, and train national lecturers to implement a brand new curriculum, we have had our fair share of bumps. A few weeks ago, some of the top leaders of the University of Livingstonia (UNILIA—our partner university) requested to meet with our students and lecturers, and we prayed it would be helpful—and not last all day.



Our little RICE family—lecturers, Rafiki Missionaries, UNILIA leadership, and new students (deputy vice chancellor sitting in the middle, director of quality assurance on the far left, and university registrar on the far right)

These meetings between Rafiki and university management are often long affairs full of mind-numbing bureaucratic details, and it requires much patience and reaching across cultural norms and expectations to understand one another and crystallize a plan. This time, though, our partners came primarily to encourage the students and staff and to affirm our unity of vision for this program. In a vividly memorable moment, the deputy vice chancellor leaned forward in his chair towards the students sitting in a circle with us and exhorted them, “you have a great privilege to learn this classical Christian way, and I want you to understand that we want you to be very unique and noticeable because of that. We want you to be the ambassadors for this type of education; you must have the vision for transforming Malawi education.” And to the lecturers and staff, “you must fully embrace the classical methods that Rafiki is teaching you, and you must start thinking classically in all of life, because it is a holistic vision. We want you become the experts, so that you can train your fellow lecturers at other campuses. Understand that UNILIA wants every one of its education programs to become classical over time.” It was thrilling to hear them so articulately expressing and supporting the vision that we have been working for years to share

Prayer Requests

- *For our final three months with our six resident seniors who will graduate in July; for their preparations for the national exams and their spiritual maturity as they prepare to leave the Village and start a more independent life.*
- *For our sixty-plus graduates who are still on Rafiki scholarship, working through degrees, diplomas, or other vocational training all over the country; for them to be faithful stewards of the gifts they have received, and passionate about following the Lord whole-heartedly.*



Meeting with our UNILIA partners and our national RICE staff

with them! I shouted in my mind, “Yes! They are getting it! They are really with us!” Most importantly, they were embodying and expressing the desire of every good missionary—for your trainees to understand and embrace the vision so that they become the standard bearers for their own people more broadly. May it be so!

Outreach

During the year that I was straddling the Headmaster and Village Administrator, and RICE Dean roles, many Outreach opportunities were put on the back-burner, but with the arrival of the McDaniels, we have made some exciting progress in reaching out beyond the Village boundaries. In addition to several new people interested in our school curriculum, Bryan has been working with pastor Brino Kumwenda to get in touch with the loose network of reformational churches across Malawi. We recently signed an MOU with over 170 of these reformed churches, which officially constituted them as the Reformation Preaching Trust. We are now strategizing how to bring them key resources from our Crossway partners, starting with reformed study Bibles and commentaries for their pastors. We also have several men from these churches here in Mzuzu preparing to start an online seminary course with Westminster Theological Seminary in the UK—which graciously made the online program available at a tiny tuition cost so that they could assist our Malawian brothers in pastoral training. Being able to help these reformed pastors (who are frankly theologically embattled in Malawi) receive resources and training is such an answer to our prayers for solid biblical teaching in Malawi!



A pastoral training conference led by our partner and personal pastor, Brino Kumwenda—we were able to send him with study Bibles to give to those who attended

The Lord does not owe us the temporal satisfaction of seeing such fruit, but it is so sweet when He makes it visible like this, even if it is sometimes only in quick snapshots. *Please pray for continued fruit in each of these areas, and for our missionary team to have stamina and unity in forwarding the work—for the benefit of Malawi and the glory of the Lord!*

Love,

Anna

Anna Liebing