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RAFIKI FOUNDATION MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER



Anna Liebing

PO Box 1018
Mzuzu, Malawi
EAST AFRICA

Contact information
Email:
AnnaL@RafikiFoundation.org
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Dear friends and family,

A few weeks ago, I was sitting just inside the gates when 7:00 a.m. hit. This is zero hour at Rafiki Village Malawi—the moment when the gates open and students begin pouring in to meet the supervising teachers on morning duty. Hundreds of students in crisp blue uniforms march cheerfully in, teachers line them up, and they begin walking the nearly half mile to the dining hall for breakfast before assembly. Normally, I would be preparing to lead morning devotions and school assembly, but today, I was heading in the opposite direction as the students. As they streamed in, I, along with Jay, Maureen, Maureen’s RICE assistant, and my three head teachers, all pulled out of the Village. As we waved to all the shouting, laughing students and bumped onto the M1 to head for Lilongwe, I felt a pang of anxiety about leaving the school, just like every mom must feel when she pulls out of the driveway for a weekend away from the kids. “I hope they behave! What if something goes really wrong and all the head teachers are gone?” But after leaving Mzuzu behind, all that was replaced with the fun of the adventure. We were headed to “The New Old Way” classical Christian education conference in Kampala, Uganda, and it was truly exciting!

It was exciting to be traveling with our national staff members. Gift, the assistant dean at RICE; Emmanuel, the assistant headmaster and upper school head teacher; Pusikani, primary school head teacher; and Lekani, pre-primary school head teacher; all were invited to attend the conference with us. We normally have little time for anything but work on campus, so it was fun to have the adventure of traveling together, especially because international travel is a really big event for them. They excitedly snapped pictures and grinned at me as the plane engines roared to life, propelling us into the air.



Even after 5 hours in the car, fresh-faced and excited for take-off!

It was exciting to be away from the Village for several days and to be able to leave the normal responsibilities in other hands while we enjoyed the time away. In Kampala, which is a much bigger city than any in Malawi, we dodged boda bodas (motorcycle taxis which terrifyingly pay zero attention to any road rules) and managed to get to some fun places—a bona fide mall with a real bookstore and a shop selling downright decent pastries, an Italian restaurant, and grocery stores that had some coveted items that we can never find in Mzuzu! At the hotel, we enjoyed meals together with

the other Rafiki missionaries and national staff who attended the conference, and simply got to bask in three days of being taken care of and enriched.

But most exciting, of course, was the conference itself. Some of the Rafiki Home Office was there, and they brought with them a handful of fantastic classical Christian educators and scholars to speak to us—Ravi Jain, Robyn Burlew, Tim Dernlan, Grant Horner, Brian Williams, David Diener, and also some key leaders of the Uganda Anglican church. It was so wonderful to meet these people and hear from them and be able to sit at meals and talk personally to them. They brought wonderful teaching about everything from basic classical Christian education principles, to parent relationships in school, to training students in virtue, to the influence of Augustine’s educational philosophy on education through the centuries. They did a great job in helping to show us how classical education is not a “western thing,” but is rather a “human thing,” and that it is the heritage of the historic church, partly founded in Africa itself! Their sessions were inspiring, refreshing, and so rich.

My favorite thing, though, was to watch our national staff and the staff of the other Rafiki Villages come together to learn these things from some of the best leaders in classical education, and to interact and learn from each other. Staff from the countries of Ethiopia, Rwanda, Uganda, Malawi, and Zambia were all present, and it was such a joy to see them all interacting with each other, learning from each other, encouraging one another to not feel alone as they discovered that we all share the same vision and daily struggles. We were able to have several meetings as national heads and staff to share ideas and ask one another questions, and to simply be inspired as the leaders of all five countries shared exciting stories of their own love for Rafiki’s education, and story after story of how our schools are transforming children and families.

As we returned home at the end of the week, we were full. Full of good food (my head teachers made sure to report back to our staff how they received 2-3 tea and snack breaks a day!), full of good conversation, full of the Word of God, full of new ideas, and full of inspiration. *Please pray with us that the Lord will enable us to bring that inspiration and our learning fruitfully to bear in our own school with our staff first and then, of course, our students.* We truly have an amazing gift to offer the Malawian people—theologically sound, gospel-centered Bible study, and the very best education in the world—classical Christian education. We truly believe, and see every day, how these gifts can and will transform lives and communities and will begin to change the cultural direction of the countries where we work. *Will you please pray with us that the Lord will bless this work, enable us to carry it forward for His glory, and raise up more and more missionaries and dedicated nationals to come serve alongside us?* Truly, the harvest is white and the laborers few, but we are inspired anew by the beauty and satisfaction found in this mission of training up Africa’s children in the fear and admonition of the Lord!

Thank you for praying and diligently supporting my work with Rafiki—may the Lord of the harvest bless you in each mission to which He has called you!

Love,

Anna
Anna Liebing



The streets of Kampala—exciting, terrifying, and full of entrepreneurs



Leading hymns at the beginning of the day



Teacher Emmanuel presenting about our implementations of Rafiki curriculum in our school



The conference crew, tired but full at the end of the trip—and happy to be back home!