



# RAFIKI

FOUNDATION  
MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER

April 2019 – Lusubilo and Tom Maggio

***"The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness"*** (Lamentations 3:22-23).

Dear friends in Christ,

We trust and pray that you are all doing well and that the annual church missions conference at CEPC was a life changing experience for everyone who attended. The timing of the conference providentially came at a time when our hearts were swelled with joy as we looked back at God's hand in leading Tom to Zambia.

This time is special to us as we celebrate Tom's arrival in Zambia six years ago on March 31, 2013, where God provided him his bride. We will also be celebrating his fourteenth year anniversary in Africa with Rafiki this coming May. Your prayers and financial support drive and sustain the work, to God be the Glory and may He reward your generosity and the time and effort you expend on supporting missions!

Many of you may know that we were in the U.S. for much of last year as we sought medical evaluation and treatment for Lusubilo. Due to your faithful support and Rafiki's insight in selecting medical insurance, she received good care and guidance from the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, Florida. We returned to Zambia in November of 2018. Since then we have been in a time of transition as Tom has handed over many of his former responsibilities and we have together worked on some new projects for Rafiki. We are also seeking a new home located closer to Lusaka, which is the capital of Zambia, for new assignments that require us to be in town more often. The new assignments include finding college placements for Rafiki children in the capital city. The first group of children will be graduating next year. We also hope to assist in re-integrating the children to the local community as some came as babies to our Village and have no contact with their families. We will also be helping with finding work placement opportunities for our Rafiki Institute of Classical Education (RICE) Program graduates and to facilitate the Widows Program with a team of ladies in Lusaka.

A few weeks after we had arrived, we were invited to attend a seminar on sustainable farming called "Farming God's Way" (FGW), which was organized by our local church, the Reformed Baptist Church in Zambia. Tom accompanied fifteen of our teenage children and their Rafiki Mother. The presenters explained several methods to improve growing crops despite reduced rainfall such as has been occurring in recent years. The objective of FGW is to use the resources that God has given to us in an optimal way to preserve the land and turn subsistence farmers into productive farmers. We fell in love with the FGW concept and we immediately got to work on a small field; little did we know that this was the year that it was most critical to apply the FGW principles.

We look back and are amazed at how the seminar came at just the right time as the annual rains began the week that followed, raining consistently until our last rains on February 17. Normally the rains would continue through end of March to mid-April. The abrupt end to the season has destroyed several maize fields of poor rural farmers whose livelihoods depend on maize as staple food and their only once-a-year source of income.

Our hearts ache for our neighbors; their crops are failing. Our good harvest gives us hope that we might be able to contribute to our community's adaptation and mitigation of climate effects. Climate change hits the poorest the hardest.

We are planning to incorporate the program into the RICE Program and the Rafiki School so the students and teachers can learn to support themselves and their families. We also look forward to when we can extend our efforts to the community around us as a Rafiki outreach program.



Rafiki Mother and young adults with seminar speaker attending the "Farming God's Way" seminar



Tom's "Farming God's Way" team: Evaristo, Lusubilo, and Charity

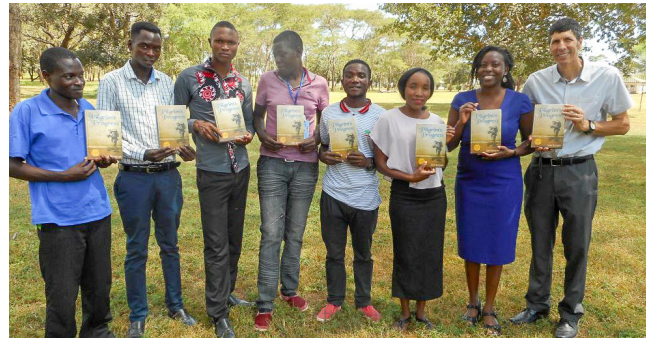


The FGW methods helped preserve the moisture in the soil, enabling our maize to withstand the drought.



A maize field planted with conventional techniques (Maize is Zambia's staple food, its production is dependent on the rains that come in once a year normally from November to April)

When we returned in November of 2018 we were asked to assist with the RICE Program; which is a three year teachers college for young people to learn to become classical Christian educators. We helped to tutor the students and grade tests and exams. Lusubilo introduced the idea of learning to read for fun outside of the normal coursework. Some of our students coming from rural poor schools have never had access to a functioning school or community library and hence have never learned to read books outside the demands of having to pass national exams. We started meeting with the interested students during their lunch hour break once a week. We are currently reading together the book, Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan. It has been a wonderful opportunity to not only learn new words but to explain the truths of the Christian faith presented in the book.



The RICE Reading Club

Another one of our new assignments concerns the Rafiki Widows Program. Rafiki endeavors to assist widows in each of our ten countries by supporting them to make hand crafted products which Rafiki then buys and sells in the U.S. This April, Judy Stokes plans to travel to Zambia to train a small group of women in professional sewing with the intent that these women would in turn train others. We have been asked to assist Judy in setting up the program as we work with our partner church denomination, the Reformed Church of Zambia. We hope to be reporting in six months on how the training and formation of widow groups have progressed.

In all of our work, we strive to present the Lord Jesus as the source of all that is true and beautiful and good. He is the only source of life and in Him only is forgiveness of sins and eternal life. We are grateful for your partnership with us through the years. If you have been led to take part in short- or long-term missions, or to support an orphaned child or one of Rafiki's hundreds of day students, or a missionary please contact Rafiki via phone 352-483-9131 or through the website at [www.rafikifoundation.org](http://www.rafikifoundation.org).

We praise God for:

- 14 years of service with Rafiki and your faithful support through the years.
- The new work assignments with Rafiki.

Please pray for:

- *The new opportunity to train ladies in professional tailoring for the Widow's Program with Judy Stokes.*
- *Wisdom for us that we may be able to discern the best time for when Lusubilo may need to have surgery as her doctors have suggested she may have to consider that as an option.*
- *Wisdom and God's leading in developing the agricultural program based on FGW principles.*
- *Us to find a house mid-way to Lusaka and the Rafiki Village, to enable us fulfill our roles in town and at the Village without a long commute each day to either place.*

Sincerely in Christ,

*Lusubilo and Tom*

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