



RAFIKI

FOUNDATION
MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER

March 2021 – Maureen and Jay Richards

“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!” (Psalm 34:8).

Dear friends and family,

OK, let's be honest—who doesn't like hot, buttery, yummy popcorn? Recently, a well-known author and Kingdom worker described answering God's call as the popcorn phenomenon. She relates how God causes some things to “pop” right in front of our eyes like a kernel of corn blossoming into the form that delights our taste buds. The question is, are we willing to recognize this when it happens and act in obedience to what God has revealed to us? Will we taste and see that He is good? Or will we ignore it and move on? In some ways, our call to serve as Missionaries to the Rafiki Village Malawi seems like it just popped up in front of our eyes. But it wasn't just a single kernel of corn popping before our eyes. It seems like the whole microwave bag is going off all at once! And so we continue our preparations to depart for Africa in July of this year.

Today I visited Rafiki's website and spent time reading the short biographies of the nearly 100 orphans that call Rafiki Village Malawi their home. You can do this, too! As I learned of the heart-breaking circumstances that they have endured, one popped before my eyes. Seven-year-old



Mwawi's mother died two weeks after delivering him and his twin brother. After being placed in a crisis nursery, Mwawi's twin also passed away. He arrived at the Village at about the age of two and

settled into his new home. Mwawi soon proved to be an energetic and enthusiastic student who is often the first to raise his hand and respond with the right answer. Mwawi knows that God loves him and sent his Son to die for his sins. He thanks God for his teachers, who speak often about Jesus and encourage their students using God's Word. We desire to help Mwawi and the 90-plus other orphans continue to thrive and flourish, know the Bible, and grow to be godly contributors in Malawi.

Another story—can anything good come out of a deadly pandemic? All of the Rafiki schools in Africa were forced to close for a time, as were all schools in Rafiki countries. During the shutdown, thanks to the generosity of Rafiki supporters, all the teachers and national workers continued to receive a paycheck. In gratitude, the teachers continued to prepare lesson plans, and sent them home to the day students during the time that schools were shut down. And since many of the day students receive no meals at home because they eat two meals a day at school, the families had an extra burden to bear that they did not have the means to meet. So, the national staff and on-site missionaries purchased bulk food staples with their own money and arranged to send food home to these families along with the lesson plans, AND the daily Rafiki Bible Study lessons. God used the circumstances to plant His Word into African homes where it may not have been previously, and to demonstrate His love by meeting their basic needs through the obedience of the Rafiki staff! Popcorn! (No, they didn't send popcorn! They provided rice and beans and peanut butter!)

We—Maureen and Jay—continue sharing with others how the Lord is calling us to this work. We expect to be representing the Rafiki Foundation in the exhibition halls of two conferences shortly: The Philadelphia Conference of Reformed Theology in Grand Rapids, Michigan; and the Colson Center Wilberforce Conference in Fort Worth, Texas. Additionally, we will be at the Rafiki Home Office in Florida in late June for specific job training for our roles as Dean of the Teacher Training College (Maureen) and Village Administrator (Jay). From there, Lord willing, we will arrive at our new home in northern Malawi in July!

Please prayerfully consider supporting us as we seek to follow His leading. To date, we have donations and pledges that cover about 60% of our need for the first two-year term. Visit our Rafiki Missionary page at: <https://rafikifoundation.org/missionary/jay-and-maureen-richards-254>

And please join us in prayer for the following:

- *Financial sufficiency to depart for Malawi in July.*
- *Approval by the Malawian government for work permits—potentially an 8-month-long process which started in October 2020!*
- *The multitude of details in preparing to go, including finding good renters for our home.*

For a short video about the Rafiki Foundation's five programs see: <https://vimeo.com/rafikifoundation>

Please enjoy some pictures from us and Rafiki.



Jay's shirt was made by the ladies in the Rafiki Widows Program, using micro-business approaches to earn a living with dignity



Our residents, twin sisters Josephine and Justina. Both are national volleyball champions!



Grade 12 students, some of whom were also members of the Rafiki Village Malawi Choir that you can see and hear at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wc9a97cVGuQ>

Soli Deo Gloria!

With love,

The Richards

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