

MARCH 2024

RAFIKI FOUNDATION MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER



Maureen and Jay Richards

PO Box 1018
Mzuzu, Malawi
EAST AFRICA

Contact information

Email:
MaureenR@RafikiFoundation.org
JayR@RafikiFoundation.org
Missionary #254

***“Look among the nations,
and see; wonder and be
astounded. For I am doing
a work in your days that
you would not believe if
told” (Habakkuk 1:5).***

Dear supporters of the Lord’s work among the nations,

In her latest newsletter, our missionary partner Anna waxed philosophical—which is her bent!—regarding mission work. She shared glimpses of the joys and difficulties, and the tendency in the West to over-romanticize both the calling to serve the nations and the laborers who answer that call. I have been pondering that as well lately. I pondered that yesterday as we rushed one of our resident boys to the clinic. Nothing romantic about a young man convulsing with fever and gasping for breath. Nothing bucolic around a diagnosis of malaria and typhoid, and possibly meningitis. Not much idyllic in getting my own Tetanus shot while he was being stabilized and admitted (Yes! They had it in stock!), after I stepped on a nail the day before while inspecting a teachers college renovation project. But I’ve concluded that we are to persevere in the mundane ordinariness and challenges of that calling and at the same time, expect to wonder and be astounded at the work of the Lord. He is gracious to give us glimpses here and there of His unbelievable work, and that makes all the difference. The joy comes, even among the difficulties.

So we pray for our sick one, as we pray both privately, individually, and as a family here in the Rafiki Village. Prayer underpins everything we do, because we realize we need the Lord to do a work, so we can be astounded and wonder. Our daily Rafiki Bible Study begins and ends with prayer and supplications. This is Maureen leading prayer at a Village gathering of the staff, orphans, and school children.



Maureen leading communal prayer

And we exhort one another. We exhort our graduates when they succeed in gaining a certificate or diploma in their college or vocational courses. Maureen was recently asked to give a speech when several of our young ladies achieved certificates from the Malawi Institute of Tourism. We remind each other that the Lord really is at work in all our lives and desires to use each of us mightily for His good purposes, if only we hold fast. Here, Jay exhorts high school graduates to hold fast to Jesus during their commencement exercise.



Graduation Commencement Speech

And then we are delighted and astounded when our charges parrot back the truths that they have heard, learned, and inculcated into their hearts. At a recent RICE Teachers College graduation, the students affirmed their individual commitments to Christ and their desire that He would use them in His work in Malawi, training up the next generation of godly contributors to the Kingdom.



RICE Teachers College Leaders listening to graduates' speeches

And we joyfully recognize the accomplishments of our persevering students, who seek diligently to equip themselves as acceptable laborers in God's vineyards. Here, Olivia happily accepts her RICE diploma in classical Christian pedagogy, on her way back to rejoin our pre-K through 12 school as a confident, well-qualified teacher.



New Teacher Olivia

And then, we even get to celebrate! In this case, with a trip to the bucolic lakeshore with all the RICE graduates for a day. Although only 30 miles away, some of them had never seen Lake Malawi. Wonder and astonishment abounding! PS: Maureen loaned Olivia the sun hat and beachwear.



Maureen and Olivia at Lake Malawi

By the time you read this, we will have two new missionaries joining us! Retired missionary Jane Hoadley is returning to Malawi after a 4-year absence to help with RICE as we await the next government inspection. Our journey to become an accredited campus of the University of Livingstonia continues. Jane plans to serve here for six months. As well, May Nealey, who we have asked you to pray for in past newsletters, is finally on her way, after filling a need for several months at Rafiki Village Liberia. *Please pray for good adjustments for both of these ladies.* And thank you so much for your faithful support, as you join us in spirit in truth in our labor in the fields of the harvest.

In the Lord's work among the nations with wonder, astonishment, and joy,

Soli Deo gloria!

The Richards

Maureen and Jay Richards

Prayer Requests

- *That every one of our children will embrace the love of Christ and be placed permanently in the palm of His hand.*
- *For smooth adjustments for returning missionary Jane and new missionary May as they join new works among the nations, in our days.*
- *For the Lord's favor in gaining government accreditation of our teachers' college.*
- *For healing and restoration to health for our sick young man.*
- *More missionaries to join Rafiki to do the work in all 10 countries.*