



October 2026

Dear friends,

As you read in Marty and Jeanette Sanders' most recent newsletter, they are retiring from the mission field. Jeanette is already in the U.S.A., and Marty will return at the end of October. Jeanette's wrist injury and subsequent surgery and complications from that are preventing their return to Ethiopia. We are so grateful for their service with Rafiki and are praying for a smooth transition for them.

Marty served well as Village Administrator and Finance Manager and will continue in those roles remotely until a new missionary couple can arrive. Jeanette will continue developing the English course she launched in Ethiopia, and it will be used throughout our ten countries in the Outreach Program. Both Jeanette and Marty were in Ethiopia during a very strategic time of establishing our Village and School on a sound footing with the local government. While their time there was shorter than they or we anticipated, we know that the Lord had them there for exactly the time he intended.

Marty will continue to work remotely for Rafiki Village Ethiopia, so their support will remain in place for now. The Sanders do have a deficit of \$22,000.00 in their funding, so your continued support for them during this time of transition would be greatly appreciated. Please contact the Home Office at 352-483-9131 or at Rafiki@RafikiFoundation.org if you have any questions or need to discontinue any automatically recurring donations. *Please join us in praying for God's blessing for Marty and Jeanette in the days and months ahead.*

Rafiki continues to commit itself to helping Africans know God and raise their standard of living through schools, classical Christian curriculum, orphan care, Bible study, Widows Program, and teacher training.

Grace and Peace,

Karen J. Elliott



OCTOBER 2026

RAFIKI FOUNDATION MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER



Marty and Jeanette Sanders
Missionary #262

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“God moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform”
From a hymn by William Cowper

Dear family and friends,

Much has happened since we last wrote, so this letter will be longer than most, but we pray it is an encouragement and gives you reason to praise God for the wonders He is performing here in Ethiopia and in your lives.

The new school year has begun. We have 410 students enrolled in our school from early childhood to grade twelve. Our Early Childhood 1 has four classes of students, totaling thirty-eight students. They are between three to four and a half years old. Our grade twelve class has sixteen students, five of whom are residents, and is the fourth graduating class for the Village and our largest group to date. *A prayer request is that we can hire another Early Childhood teacher and at least two more assistants.*



Bibles for their graduates
being shared by Rafiki
with a partner school

In August, Jan taught the Fundamentals of English Course she had developed during the school break. The teachers' response to the course was overwhelmingly positive, and it was well received. Seven teachers from neighboring government schools attended the first week and were highly complimentary. They were discussing how to replicate a comparable course for the teachers in their schools. *A praise item is that from the time we committed to serving with Rafiki, and before knowing where we would serve, it was Jan's desire to serve as a missionary and to train and mentor other teachers. All of Jan's life—her passions, her education, her experience working in schools, homeschooling, and tutoring—had served to equip her for this task. As Cowper says in the quote above, “God moves in mysterious ways, his wonders to perform.”*



Jan teaching the Fundamentals of English Course

The Home Office staff have reviewed the material and intend to include it in our Outreach in other countries. Churches and schools in some surrounding areas and countries have a desire to use our Rafiki Bible Study and our Rafiki Classical Christian School Curriculum (Rafiki Resources), and Home Office believes the course Jan developed will be a great benefit to those teachers who need to improve their English to teach the Bible study and school curriculum. Jan will be editing the course to make it useful in such contexts.

While English is the official language in all of the countries in which Rafiki serves, it is not most people's first language. Being proficient in English provides access to opportunities. So, a key path out of poverty in Ethiopia and other countries in the continent, is being able to speak, read, and write in English. *Please pray for this Outreach opportunity—for the pastors, schoolteachers, and Christian schools who seek to be a witness in their communities and country for the gospel.*

Two weeks after school started, our school and Village were visited by eighteen local government department leaders from the mayor's cabinet. After their tour, they had many questions, and Marty had the opportunity to explain who Rafiki is. That day, most of those in attendance went from knowing little about our school to thinking highly of it. That included the chairperson of the council, who moved from not knowing us to becoming an advocate for us. *Another item of praise! The more supporters of our school in the government and other spheres of influence that God gives us, the more freedom we have to be who we are—a classical Christian school.*

From 2020-2022, Ethiopia experienced a civil war. Most of the conflict was in the north part of the country. More than 600,000 people died and over a million people were displaced. There was a peace deal brokered and signed in 2022. That deal has begun to unravel, and the prospects of another conflict have emerged, except this time there are indications that the next conflict will not be strictly internal but will include several neighboring countries. This type of unrest is very difficult for most people, who possess few safeguards against the economic and security implications. *Please pray for the peace of Ethiopia and the various horn of Africa countries. Also, pray for the church as it seeks to shepherd its people through hard times.*

If you have stayed with us to this point, that is good because we have some unexpected, "God moving in mysterious ways" news. On Saturday, September 5, Jan had an unfortunate accident. She climbed onto a counter to fix a curtain rod. When climbing down, she fell and broke her right wrist in two places just above the joint with the hand. In telling this story, please indulge us because the details are important. Days after we first arrived in Ethiopia, we were blessed by meeting an Ethiopian medical doctor. He has become a good friend, and he has helped our Village on the medical front in countless ways. Marty needed his help just weeks after we arrived, and we reached out to him again when Jan fell. He recommended for us to go to the leading orthopedic hospital in the country, in Addis Ababa. So, we went to the hospital, and the doctors and staff were great; but Jan has a complex medical history, and given her conditions and risk factors, it was recommended that we go back to the U.S. for surgery.

To keep this story shorter, Jan broke her wrist in Ethiopia on a Saturday. Through the amazing support and help of the Home Office, we were on a plane for the U.S. the following Wednesday, in Charlotte on Thursday, Jan saw the doctor on Friday, and had surgery the following Tuesday. God's ways are not only mysterious but wondrous. *This is another item of praise at how God moved so swiftly and showed us His lovingkindness.*

God also provided a place for Jan to continue to recuperate in the U.S. after Marty returned to Ethiopia (leaving on September 23). Jan is currently recovering while staying in Waxhaw, NC, and Marty is currently in the Village in Ethiopia.



Sympathy and support from the Village gardeners after Jan's fall



Marty in his office

Days before Jan's accident, we had been discussing the sense that we both were experiencing, that perhaps God was about to bring change into our lives, but we had no idea what He was doing. What He is doing has now become somewhat clear, but all questions have not been answered. What we have come to understand is that, though unexpected, our time for living in Ethiopia has come to an end. Marty will be leaving Ethiopia (or has left by the time you read this) on Thursday, October 22.

Marty will continue to serve as both Village Administrator and Headmaster of the School virtually until a replacement can be put in place. Jan will be editing and preparing the English course for wider use. Beyond this, what is next for us is still a mystery to us, BUT we know it will be wondrous. We are grateful for you, your encouragement, your prayers, and your support. This journey, which began about 22 months ago, has been filled with joys, impossibilities, difficulties, and accomplishments—and we do not regret one moment of it. We only wish we had maybe done it sooner. We do not know what the future holds, but we do know who our God is and that He is faithful and is always working together for our good.



Saying goodbye to the place we called home for the last year

There are many times that language is inadequate to express the depth of our feelings, so please receive our gratitude from the depth for which we seek to express it—THANK YOU!

Your missionaries,

Marty and Jeanette Sanders

Marty and Jan Sanders

Please pray for

- *our fellow missionary Esther*
- *the Short-term Missionaries coming to help in our absence*
- *the Home Office staff*
- *that God will quickly raise up our replacements as we prepare for the end of our time in Africa*
- *our staff, teachers, residents, and day students through this transition*
- *peace and unity, for encouragement and faith that God is at work*
- *that our support will continue and even grow during the transition—we have a shortfall in our funding that we would like to see resolved so that the work that God is doing may flourish even more*

Learn more about Rafiki's expanding opportunities.

Visit our newly designed website RafikiFoundation.org to learn how to:

- Purchase the Rafiki Bible Study for small groups for your church or neighborhood
- Serve as a missionary with Rafiki
- Sponsor a child with the Rafiki Foundation to bring God's Word and the best education in the world to some of the neediest children in the world in Africa.

Explore the Rafiki Foundation YouTube channel.

Visit (youtube.com/@RafikiFoundation) for videos from Rafiki children, teaching at our annual Enrichment conferences, and the teaching at our African classical Christian conferences.

Listen to our podcast for current discussions on Rafiki's work in Africa truenorth.fm/show/the-rafiki-foundation-podcast/