



Dear friends and family,

This week I had a long talk with some of our senior students about the importance of believing that God has plans greater than anything we could conjure up on our own. As they transition into life outside the Rafiki Foundation campus, they are overwhelmed with anxiety, excitement, sadness, joy, and basically every other emotion you could think up. Little did I know, I needed to hear it just as much as they did. There have been countless times in the past few months, where a lesson for my students turned into God speaking to my heart. I have grown more and more thankful that He not only hears, but also responds. Thank you all for continuously lifting me and my service up to the Lord, be encouraged, it is never in vain.

Initially upon arrival, I was assigned to be Headmaster of the school. Things changed and I have, for the past seven months, been the Assistant Dean at the Teacher Training College (RICE). More than anything, I am grateful for the opportunity to help mold each future teacher into an educator who exudes God's truth and a love for extending that to the upcoming generation. As the term comes to an end, everyone is diligent in their studies and focused on successfully completing Final Exams.



Habila Thankgod and Janice Faith in the RICE library

Over our last break, I was able to not only attend, but be a part of a traditional Nigerian wedding! One of our senior secondary teachers invited me to experience her special day and I was honored. We

traveled about two hours to a surrounding village and it was the most beautiful ceremony. Before the Solemnization, women from the village met together and prepared a meal to be served to the bridal party.



Local "mamas" preparing rice and stew

Once the service started, another women's group from the local church did traditional songs with handmade instruments. It was amazing! Everyone was singing, dancing, and smiling. I couldn't help but think that this is the kind of community that is necessary within a marriage, not simply at the ceremony. I was able to witness countless people stop in their tracks and pray with them. The place was overflowing with God's love.



Local Women's Outreach celebrating through song

The bride's "ladies" were the Maid of Honor (gold), Maids (pink), and Friends of the Bride (blue).

Everyone was welcoming and willing to translate so I could meet people who may not have spoken English. Brenda and Yakop were showered in encouragement and I am grateful to have been a part.



Bridal party



Bride and groom

I have been intentional about not spending too much time on campus. I truly believe that in serving a community, you must know and understand what makes it unique. As I have gone exploring, I have found small local shops and met with compelling local elders. Recently, the government commissioned this mural to be painted beneath the flyover bridge in the middle of town. It displays the pieces of Jos culture that make it special. For the past few weeks there have been random attacks and unexplainable deaths, but I am confident that this mural, in all its beauty, is a picture of hope.



As much as I have loved seeing the hidden sweetness of Jos, I also love turning my house into a home. For the past month I have been trying my luck in gardening and I must say, I have a long way to go! A couple of the senior boys (Chris and Micah) have

been teaching me about the Village farm and in my new spinach and pepper garden! There is so much beauty surrounding us. I pray I never grow numb to the intricacies of God's hand in creation. Saturdays are filled with plaiting hair, cutting hair, gardening, cleaning, and cooking—I wouldn't have it any other way.



Thank you again for trusting God's call over my life. Please continue sharing these newsletters with your friends and family and if He prompts you, encourage them to join me in serving Nigeria. We are such small pieces in God's plan of restoration and today I was reminded by one of my students, **"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). So, in that truth, let us all press on.

Please be praying for

- Peace within our community
- God to comfort recent victims of Boko Haram
- A renewed sense of strength in our entire team
- God to send more educators to Nigeria
- Peace and understanding for me and my family
- The senior students, as they transition to university and subsequent adulthood

With all of the love I can muster,

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