



RAFIKI

FOUNDATION
MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER

December 2020 – Catherine Upton



Rafiki students walking to school in the morning

Dear friends and family,

Merry Christmas! This Thanksgiving, my heart swelled with gratitude for the many ways God has blessed me. First and foremost, with Christmas approaching, I am inexpressibly grateful that **“when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons”** (Galatians 4:4-5). I am also deeply grateful for the support that so many of you have shown me over the years in my pursuit of mission work. And now, I am grateful and excited to be accepted to serve as a Long-Term Missionary in Africa with the Rafiki Foundation!

The Rafiki Foundation is a nonprofit missions organization serving the continent of Africa. The organization’s goal is to come alongside Africans as a *rafiki* (“friend” in Swahili) to help them know God and raise their standard of living. Rafiki has established Training Villages in ten African countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. At these Villages, Rafiki raises orphans

and educates them, along with other children from the community, through a classical Christian education model. They also train African educators in their teachers colleges (RICE—Rafiki Institute of Classical Education) and partner with local widows to teach them artisan skills by which they can provide for their families. God’s Word is central to daily life at the Villages as everyone participates daily in the Rafiki Bible Study. The vision of Rafiki is to cultivate a multitude of godly contributors in Africa by training Africans to transform Africa for Christ.



A typical Rafiki classroom

How did I get connected with Rafiki?

In high school, I began to feel that God was calling me to the mission field and particularly developed a heart for Africa. Through several short-term mission trips, God confirmed and deepened that call through the joy, excitement, and growth I experienced on each trip and the encouragement of team members. My desire to follow God's leading grew, and in 2016, I moved to Florida to attend Reformation Bible College and work toward a Bachelor of Theology in Biblical Studies in preparation for a future in missions.

Rafiki's Home Office is located just half an hour from my college, and in the spring of my freshman year, they held an informational lunch at our school. By the end of that lunch, I was so excited about the work Rafiki is doing that I was ready to leave for Africa immediately! But God was first calling me to be patient and to spend time learning and growing in my faith and understanding of His Word. Almost four years later, God opened the door for me to come on staff at the Rafiki Home Office, and this past August I began working as an assistant to the Orphan Care and Schools Manager. Over the short time I have been here, I have come to appreciate even more the ways in which God's Word is at work through this ministry, and I am enormously blessed to be a part of it.



I will continue working here at the Home Office while I finish college, raise my support, and go through training for the mission field. Lord willing, I will go out to Africa in the fall of 2021, and I plan to serve for two years (maybe more).

The hope is that I will work as an assistant to the dean of the RICE college at the Rafiki Village Liberia, but that may change based on where the need is greatest. I am simply excited to serve wherever and in whatever capacity Rafiki can use me!



Students of the RICE Program

As I spend the next year getting ready to move around the world, I humbly ask for your prayers and support. *Please pray that God will prepare me for the work he has planned for me. Pray that he will strengthen me and give me boldness and wisdom.*

Though fundraising seems a bit daunting, I am excited for the opportunity to trust God more and rest in the knowledge that He will provide all I need. *Would you prayerfully consider partnering with me as a financial supporter?*

I look forward to keeping you updated as I set out on this new and exciting adventure. If you would like to know more about what I will be doing with the Rafiki Foundation or about the organization itself, please feel free to contact me. I would love to chat with you!

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Catherine".

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