



RAFIKI

FOUNDATION
MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER

November 2021 – Christie VanKuiken

“Rejoice not over me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall rise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD will be a light to me” (Micah 7:8).

Dear friends and family,

As you know, in September I was diagnosed with colon cancer. A quick break in Grand Rapids, turned into surgery and now six weeks of recovery. During this school term, when I have not been able to be in Liberia teaching the teachers in training, God has been teaching me lessons that are a part of my faith journey and serve to make me love Him more and strengthen my call. The following are some of the lessons this journey with colon cancer has taught me.

God delivered me in the past, He can do it again. Early on in my diagnosis as I was singing and praying in church the reassurance that God gave me was that even though I was in a battle, I had been in battles before and God had always delivered me. As I thought of my life on the mission field the last eleven years, I could easily recount many times God had protected and helped me. Some that came to mind were Ebola, poisonous snakes, near traffic accidents, spiritual opposition, and most recently COVID. These too were battles. The God who delivered me in the past, had the power to do it again. This was a comfort! ***“The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine”*** (1 Samuel 17:37).

My own Pilgrim’s Progress.

Sunday morning before my Monday surgery, I awoke with a very reassuring dream on my mind. In my dream I faced opposition that was trying to defeat me. As the enemy advanced, I experienced the Lord’s presence surrounding me and holding me close from the enemy. This vivid dream, still

alive in my mind, was another assurance of God being my shelter to surround me and protect me. In fact, throughout this time, I have felt God’s peace with whatever the outcome might be. ***“You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me”*** (Psalm 139:5).

Live with no regrets.

One of the sermons I heard while I have been back in the States included the challenge to live with no regrets. The decision to leave Grand Rapids eleven years ago and move to Liberia was not an easy one. Yet, through the study of God’s Word, He called me to leave and go. When I heard the diagnosis of cancer, suddenly the future was uncertain. I did not know when I would be returning to Liberia, if ever. In doing so, I realized that I had no regrets about answering that call. I had heard the call and went and would go again if God allowed me to. I was thankful. ***“Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain”*** (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Liberia in sight.

Recently, I received the good news that my cancer was not in my lymph nodes. Liberia, the country God put in my heart, is in sight once more for me. My heart longs to see the full transformation possible through God’s power, and I am excited to go back and see that being worked out. Because of Rafiki’s work in Liberia, people are being changed through the study of God’s Word. Our own residents, day students, and RICE students are being called and equipped to be the next leaders of Liberia. Every day young people in our teacher

training program are developing spiritually and are challenged to be mission-minded. They are learning content to be strong teachers and integrity to break down and stop corruption. God is at work!



Thanksgiving and a challenge.

Soon I will be recovered, and plan to return to Liberia in December. I am so thankful for God's healing work in my life and for the outpouring of concern and care I have received from you through my cancer journey.

Now as I return to Liberia, I ask that you prayerfully consider one or more of the following:

- 1) *Pray daily or weekly for me and my work in Liberia. Notify me if you want to be added to my prayer updates e-mail group*
- 2) *Give financially to support my work in Liberia. I am in need of additional financial partners.*
- 3) *Serve by coming on a short-term mission trip to Liberia to help with the work in person.*

Please also pray for:

- *All 250 Rafiki Day Students to have sponsors and be fully funded soon.*
- *For generous giving to the Africa Expansion Campaign. Rafiki is entering a season of exponential growth. We anticipate the thousands that Rafiki is currently ministering to across our 10 countries will turn to tens of thousands. To meet these new opportunities, we are asking God for a 25% increase over Rafiki's current annual budget which could increase Rafiki's impact 10-fold.*

Note: Rafiki is now able to accept non-cash gifts such as real estate or estate bequests. Contact Rafiki@RafikiFoundation.org for more information.

Sincerely,

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