

DECEMBER 2024

# RAFIKI FOUNDATION MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER



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Missionary #258

***“But 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).***

Dear friends and family,

We recently heard a sermon about the perfection of God’s timing. In His sovereignty, He sets specific times for our prayers to be answered, for our correction, and for our blessing. He also appoints seasons for our faith to be developed in the waiting. During this Advent season, we meditate—along with you—on “the fullness of time,” when God saw fit to send us a Savior. Hallelujah!

## Education in Kenya

Historical records suggest that the “traditional system” of education in Kenya was a lifelong process which involved the transference, from one generation to the next, of values, knowledge, and skills needed for survival. This informal education system predated the 1700s. However, the first formal school was established at Rabai Mpya, Kenya in 1846 by missionaries connected to the Church Missionary Society (now known as the Anglican Missionary Society). It was located approximately 19 km (12 miles) northwest of Mombasa—the oldest city and trading center in Kenya.

From the mid-19th to the mid-20th century, Kenyan education was basically driven by the British colonial education model, but that began to change when Kenya gained its independence in December of 1963. Public and private schools have had various educational programs in recent decades including the “8-4-4” and the current “CBC” (Competency Based Curriculum). Christian teachers in the public school system admit that the CBC may be competency-based, but it is not a value-based curriculum. Unfortunately, there are many gaps in government-run education. However, with the strong thrust of biblical worldview integration in all our subjects, the Rafiki Classical Christian School (RCCS) curriculum is viewed by many as “CBC+.”

The academic calendar in Kenya is organized differently than in the U.S. While American schools generally operate on a two-semester system, opening in late August/early September and closing in late May, Kenyan schools operate on a trimester system. The first term of the year begins in early January and concludes in early April. The second trimester runs from May to August. Finally, the last trimester runs from late August through October, and there are three-week breaks between each of the terms.

The one long break is at the conclusion of the school year. Although it stretches from October 25 to January 2, students simply refer to it as “The Christmas Break.” This is the time when most people travel “upcountry” (making a 6, 8, or even 10-hour journey to their ancestral villages) to fellowship with their elders and extended family.

And so, it is at “Christmas Break” that we write this letter to you. While students and their families left the towns surrounding Rafiki weeks ago, our faithful teaching staff remained. The Kenyan academic schedule gives us a wonderful opportunity to work with and mentor our teachers, uninterrupted, for five weeks. This is necessary for the new teachers we hired, but it is important for even our veteran staff members.

During this period, we get to focus our full attention on their spiritual and professional development through daily Bible study and discussion, deeper-level training on lesson preparation, teaching methodologies, and creative classroom design to enhance student learning. Of course, a lot of team bonding, role-play, self-reflection, and hymn singing also occur during this special session! When teacher training ends, our teachers also head upcountry to celebrate the holidays with family.

Conversely, other departments in the Village will continue serving the Lord on their own appointed schedules. These departments include:

Widows Program—provides dignified work for impoverished widows in Africa as well as theologically sound Bible study materials.

Outreach—distributes the Rafiki Bible Study and school curriculum to church denominations and new school start-ups, respectively.

RICE—trains teachers in classical Christian education.

Orphan Care—arranges temporary homestays for the orphans during school breaks and carries out regular check-ins with the Rafiki graduates.

Plant Management—the team of local workers who repair all the physical structures and maintain the grounds within the Village.

It is a unique experience to be working in anticipation of a new school year while at the same time preparing our hearts and minds for Christ’s arrival during this season of Advent. Christmas commercialism is alive and thriving in metropolitan cities around the world; and Nairobi (about 40 minutes away) is no exception. But life moves at a more relaxed pace for those who remain in the Mwiki-Kasarani townships and have limited income.

There are no “chestnuts roasting on open fires” but there are plenty of maize (corn) ears roasting. Yum! You will not see candy canes adorning the store windows (or even many stores with windows) in this area, but the locals do enjoy chewing on a stalk of fresh sugarcane as they walk along the roadways. There is no fear of Jack Frost nipping any noses (the average temperature for December is about 76 degrees), yet there is still a different disposition among the souls who remain here. Even for non-believers, “anticipation” fills the atmosphere... **“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace”** (Isaiah 9:6).

## Updates

The Ambassadors Football Club (an international sports ministry, based in Northeast Ohio) has become affiliated with Rafiki Village Kenya. This partnership will provide another child evangelism opportunity with our students (afterschool) and training for Rafiki teachers to be certified as coaches.

## Praises

- We are grateful to be starting our third year with the Rafiki Foundation—an organization which prioritizes daily Bible study and a quality education for children who would not otherwise have such an opportunity. We are helping people to know God and raise their standard of living!

## Prayer Requests

- *Our new teachers will not feel overwhelmed this year but will learn to lead their students through the rich Rafiki Curriculum, in faith.*
- *Continued protection for us here and for our family back in the States.*
- *Theo will receive his official Kenyan drivers' license soon.*
- *More churches and individuals will catch Rafiki's vision in 2025 and help support us in this ministry. (We have not fully met our support raising requirement for 2024.)*



- School enrollment has increased incrementally from 387 students (in 2022) to a projected 436 for 2025. And we are excitedly preparing a classroom for our second stream of Grade 7 students!
- Crystal's condition continues to improve (she returned to Kenya "about 85% restored"), and she is easing back into full missionary and administrative duties.
- Theo was able to reach the summit of the Ngong Mountain range (and return home safely)!

Finally, we want to thank everyone for the intercessory prayers and words of encouragement. We wish all of you *"Heri ya Krismasi na Mwaka Mpya!"* (Merry Christmas and Happy New Year).

***"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit"*** (Romans 15:13 NIV).

Love,

*Theodore and Crystal*

Theodore and Crystal Wilson

Please enjoy the following pictures of life here at Rafiki Kenya.



A snapshot of some RCCS teachers during the first week of training



Kenya Scouts and leaders pose after their 3 day/2 night Activity Badge Camporee in the Rafiki Village



A joyful gathering of our rookie teachers, as they received their orientation



The first Ambassadors Football Club TREC training class (for Kenyan Christian coaches)



The emotional celebration of Rafiki teachers at their Presbyterian University of East Africa (PUEA) graduation-continuing their journey to becoming master teachers



Celebrating with Rafiki resident, Peter (pictured next to Theo), following his baptism at a local church

