



# The Rafiki Foundation, Inc.

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*"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge. . ." (Proverbs 1:7 NIV).*

*". . . knowledge of the Holy One is understanding" (Proverbs 9:10 NIV).*

*"For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;" (Proverbs 2:6 NIV).*

*"Instruction in youth is like engraving in stones." African Proverb*

Greetings from Texas:

To my friends in Africa, England, Europe, and all over the United States. How I enjoyed seeing ya'll on my 6,000 mile road trip! Thank you for your encouragement and love, for your hospitality and generous gifts, for your support, and your prayers. I am happy to report that my support for 2007-2008 is now at 88% and climbing. Every time I spoke with my friends about the work of Rafiki in Liberia, West Africa, my future there became more precious. Having returned to South Texas for two weeks, before going to Africa, I find myself impatient and ready to leave as planned on May 12th. God has used you, His people, to prepare my heart and mind for my calling in Monrovia, Liberia. *Please pray that I am prepared for all the other cultural changes I will experience in the coming months.*

## **Knowledge**

What is knowledge? Plato asserted that for a statement to contain knowledge, three criteria must be fulfilled; the statement must be justified, true, and believed. If you look up the theory of knowledge, or epistemology, in Wikipedia on the Internet, you will read that "epistemology is the branch of philosophy that studies the nature and scope of knowledge and belief. The term 'epistemology' is based on the Greek words 'episteme' (knowledge or science) and 'logos'..." Wait! Where is this going? This will give you an idea of what it is like for a new teacher to begin to learn about the model of the Trivium in the classical education approach, with its three levels of grammar, logic, and rhetoric. Add to that the need to teach from a biblical worldview, incorporating the components of God, man, creation, purpose, and moral order. Now imagine that you are an African teacher, who speaks English as a second language. One more factor: all your time as a student and in teacher's college has prepared you only to teach students to memorize facts and systems of problem solving in order to pass standardized tests. No wonder our ROS and especially our African teachers are so relieved to know that *"The fear of the LORD is*

*the beginning of knowledge."* As students begin to learn about the world, they begin to learn about the Creator of all things and the Author of all knowledge. Knowledge is the beginning—when a child learns the names of things in his world and facts about life. In Liberia, the schools have been standing unoccupied due to the conflict that ended in 2005. Trained teachers are rare and resources are non-existent. These are just a few reasons why Rafiki wants to get the preschool open as soon as possible in Liberia. *Please pray that as we work on the outfitting for the Liberia preschool we will have obtained all the basic resources needed to impart beginning knowledge to our young students.*

## **Understanding**

Africans rightly regard education as "engraving on stones" for youth. Education ranks among the most treasured opportunities for our African brothers and sisters. One of my favorite memories is of the Rafiki children in Uganda talking about how much they love school and their happy voices as they approached classes every morning. But this is nothing compared to the joy of our primary students beginning to learn how the facts of their world interrelate. The Bible teaches us that knowledge of God leads to understanding. Knowledge of our world and of ourselves leads to understanding about both, with the right guidance. In the early years of a Rafiki education (three years old to about eight years), during the grammar stage, the students have learned much about their world, themselves, and most importantly, about God. Thus, they are ready to begin the logic stage, during which they will not only begin to understand life, but appreciate the finer points of God's providential provisions and designs. How long did it take you to appreciate all that God does for you, or the way He provides for every single living creature? Honestly, it took me at least forty years! What a joy it is to know that our teachers, mothers, and missionaries will have the opportunity to share what they have learned with children as young as eight. *Please pray for*

*applications from qualified individuals and for the selection of key personnel at the Village, including mothers and teachers.*

### **Wisdom**

Isn't wisdom what we all want? Wisdom about life, about God, about ourselves and our plans? Yes! But is it possible to have wisdom without knowledge and understanding? If we look to God's Word we find that all three must work together. The book of Proverbs is entirely about knowledge, understanding, and wisdom, providing us with an instruction guide for all areas of life. In the classical model of education, the last stage of rhetoric uses the students' innate desire to interpret, analyze, and discriminate the knowledge and understanding they have acquired, for success in all areas of life. And so we also continue, as adults, to seek wisdom and try to put it into practice in all matters. Right now we are seeking wisdom about adjusting our time-line to a new, slower process of getting the Village construction complete for the first phase. I will be moving into an apartment in Monrovia, dependent on my fellow teammates, the Blands, who have graciously offered to provide hospitality to me, until the Village is open. *Please pray that the pace of the work will pick up and that the container with crucial construction items will leave Texas for Liberia soon. Also pray for honesty, good workmanship, and safety at the construction site.* In the providence of God, all will be ready at just the right time, for God's glory.



THE RAFIKI VILLAGE IN THE BACKGROUND.  
TIE-DYED FABRIC FOR CURTAINS AND BEDSPREADS  
DRYING IN THE FOREGROUND.

As always, yours in Christ,

Joanne

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P.S. From the Home Office: Joanne is at 88% of the total needed for her current term January 2007–December 2008.