



# The Rafiki Foundation, Inc.

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*“The LORD has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy. Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like streams in the Negev. Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him” (Psalm 126:3-6).*

Greetings from Rafiki Village Liberia.

Liberia is a land in recovery. How long this recovery will last is anyone’s guess, but every single Liberian will assure you that recovery is indeed in store for this once-troubled country.

Some Liberians who are part of the Diaspora (living abroad) have returned to their homeland to at least see the progress made since the civil war ended in 2005. I have met some of them as I have traveled to and from Liberia this year. Generally, they are disappointed. Imagine coming back to your home after being away fifteen years or so, to find that the life you knew is non-existent. There is very little infrastructure (electricity, roads, water)—even less in the way of education or day-to-day government operations. All goods are imported and the port is limited by the ships that remain sunken in its waters. Like the exiles returning to Judah, described in Psalm 126, returning Liberians are striving to live in a difficult, harsh environment while trusting that the seed they sow in tears will bring a harvest from God one day. The Expository Bible Commentary has this to say about Psalm 126:

The psalm began with expressions of joy and wonder at the restoration from exile. It concludes on the expectation of another miracle to take place: the people will “return” (or “come home”) singing “songs of joy,” because of the plentiful harvest (“carrying sheaves with him”). The God who has acted with love and fidelity to his people will continue to be with them. Thus the psalm attests to God’s lovingkindness and assures God’s people in any age of his abiding faithfulness. His promises are secure.

Rafiki Village Liberia has become something of a symbol for the future of Liberia, not only for those of us who work here, but for many Liberians as well. Our beige buildings with their red roofs show up boldly against the beach landscape. U.N. helicopters circle overhead every once in a while, carrying visitors, we are told, who want to know about that “beach resort” down there. Our

children have adjusted to well-built and neat homes that are dry and plumbed, and even have hot water when the sun is shining. The Liberian Ministry of Health and Social Welfare considers Rafiki Village a “model orphanage” for Liberia.

However great this physical prosperity may seem, it is God’s spiritual prosperity that will bring the needed change in the next generation. Liberia’s President, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf said, on her visit in July, that it is the “Christian environment” that is most encouraging to her. Children who have only known hunger and uncertainty are now living in a covenant community under the care of mature Christian mothers and teachers, missionaries and volunteers. All the Rafiki staff study the Bible systematically and discuss the truths of God’s Word as a community. This is what will change Liberia! God Himself will be the agent of change, and He will carry these vulnerable children into adulthood. But the change is not quick; no soul-change is. Mothers who haven’t known complete peace for almost twenty years have difficulty transmitting it to children. Staff who have had to fight for food and survival are used to competition and uncertainty. Children who have seen and experienced more than most adults in the Western world don’t forget those experiences quickly. But they do forget, over time. Our youngest children, three years or younger, are slowly “forgetting” about



the dangers of war. It is taking longer for the older children but they, too, are starting to trust those around them.

ANNA AND MIATTA



BENJAMIN AND JEHU



BENJAMIN AND ADAM



OBADIAH ASLEEP AT DINNER

Please pray with us that these children and all the children who come to Rafiki Village Liberia will, over time, be the generation God uses to change Liberia from a land of devastation to a country of spiritual prosperity, for His glory. Let us continue to sow the seeds so that one day they will reap "with songs of joy."

Travel plans for November – December

Nov. 7-14 Wirral, England

Nov. 14-21 Boerne/San Antonio, Texas

Nov. 21-24 Columbia, Maryland

Nov. 24-28 Boerne/San Antonio, Texas

Nov. 28-30 Tallahassee, Florida

Nov. 30 – Dec. 6 Boerne/San Antonio, Texas

Singing with joy,

Joanne

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