



The Rafiki Foundation, Inc.

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“All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God’s grace in all its truth” (Colossians 1:6).

A lone white steer lets out a mournful “moo” from inside the Rafiki gate to a passing herd of cattle on the other side of the road. What?? Has Rafiki expanded into animal husbandry? No, the steer was a Christmas gift from a Nigerian supporter, but the Lord is causing growth in Rafiki in many other ways. The Apostle Paul encouraged the Colossians that the gospel was growing, and we want to encourage you that in this corner of the world, it is bearing fruit as well.

RCC

The Rafiki Village is now home to fifty-four children. The first cluster of six cottages all have mothers, and a mother-in-training will soon have children in the seventh home. Three of the most recent children to come are from an area where there was religious fighting and their parents were killed. A pastor in the area was doing his best to care for a large number of orphans with limited resources and was grateful that Rafiki was able to take these boys. We couldn’t help but notice the contrast of their physical condition to that of the children who have lived here for awhile. Their distended bellies and small stature gave evidence of poor nutrition. Peter, the fourteen-month-old baby, had very tiny legs and had not yet crawled. In the three months since his arrival, he has not only learned to crawl, but is walking! We are grateful we can offer them a place in which they can physically grow and thrive.

RGC

The Rafiki Girls’ Center now has five semesters of girls in training. The staff can hardly believe that the first class will graduate in October. The RGC had prepared a Christmas story presentation, and the girls from this first class acted as

narrators. They had memorized large portions of the Christmas story which was intertwined with its reenactment by other classes. They spoke with such poise and confidence that their growth into young women who love the Lord was obvious. As the time of their graduation draws near, they are beginning to think about what they want to do.

RBC

As if the onset of the *Harmattan* season wasn’t enough, there have been clouds of dust and piles of dirt gathering across the road from the village. But for this we are glad! It is another sign of growth as the ground is broken and the foundation is laid for the Rafiki Boys’ Center. The RBC will run a program parallel in many ways to that of the RGC, but will likely offer training in areas such as agriculture, carpentry, mechanics, and technology. We hope that the doors will open to the first class in April 2005.

Children’s Center School

As is true in any preschool, children have a difficult time waiting their turn and understanding that “later” will come. Julie had frequently seen frustration and tears in her classroom when children were told they would have to wait to do a project. Such was the case with four-year-old Dorcas. One day, Julie decided to explain very clearly what “wait” and “just a minute” meant and how the children needed to learn patience. A few days later, when Dorcas asked to make something just before snack time, Julie told her it would have to be after. Dorcas put on a big smile and said, “Yes” with definite understanding. She was rewarded with big hugs of appreciation for her patience and evidence of growth!

The P-1 (1st grade) children have been learning from the Gospel of Mark this year with teacher Warren. By God's saving grace, most of them showed an interest in the salvation message, and after praying with their mommies, received Christ as their Savior. What joy there was on our team to know of these first fruits! In addition, we saw evidence of their own joy this week. As the children played outside, they noticed four *Fulani* children watching from outside the fence. This large tribe in much of West Africa is semi-nomadic shepherds and largely Muslim. Sadly, they are often marginalized by others in this society. The Rafiki children, though, ran to the fence to greet them and wanted to share their memory verse with them—John 3:16.



Family

As many of you know, David was overcome with a disturbing swallowing problem in mid-September which required him to leave abruptly for medical attention on September 20. After a myriad of tests, the specialists ruled out any neuromuscular diseases. Finally, they determined that he has upright proximal acid reflux. Whether that had anything to do with the swallowing wasn't fully determined, but David returned to us on December 10. It was a time of growth, as we experienced more deeply that God's grace is sufficient in our weakness and that He is true to His promises.

He allowed Julie's mom to come and help in countless ways. In turn she got to experience life in Jos including water rationing, the taste of dust in her mouth as she slept, wearing a head tie, eating pounded yam and draw soup, seeing a whole herd of elephants at Yankari National Park, and watching traditional tribal dancing as a VIP in Miango village on New Year's Day. If any of that peaks your interest you are highly welcome to come. MiniMissionaries are always needed at the village.

Prayer Needs

We are constantly reminded of our dependence on the Lord and the part that prayer plays in our lives. Would you pray for us in the following ways?

- Safety in our home and on the road
- Good health, especially for Olivia who has been sick frequently
- Excellence in everything we do as we grow

We will be stateside again this summer for five weeks and would love to share more about the work Rafiki is doing here. David will be in school at Covenant College in Lookout Mountain, Georgia, from June 26 – July 15 and would be available to share in that area. Julie will be available to share in Washington State from June 26 – July 3 and July 10 – 17. Formal or informal, big or small, we just enjoy meeting with you! Contact us directly at the e-mail address below.

Sincerely in Christ,

*David & Julie
Lauren, Anica, Amelie*
David & Julie Pederson
Lauren, Anica, Amelie & Olivia

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