



# RAFIKI

FOUNDATION  
MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER

July 2021 – Maureen and Jay Richards

***“Great are the works of the LORD... Full of splendor and majesty is his work, and his righteousness endures forever” (Psalm 111:2-3).***

Beloved friends, family, prayer warriors, and supporters,

This will be our final newsletter written to you while we are still in the United States. The next one will come from...somewhere in Africa! Exactly where, well, read on and we'll get to that.

As we somewhat frantically work to get everything arranged for our departure, we have had cause to be in awe of the work of the Lord: physical as in His creation, and supernatural as in His care for us. As to the physical, we have traveled some for conferences and family events and that has allowed us to marvel at His handiwork. From the waters and swampy forests of Florida, to the BIGNESS of Texas, to the alpine beauty of hiking places in Montana, to the sparkling, dune-festooned reaches of the Michigan water-wonderland. We have represented the Rafiki Foundation at two conferences by staffing its exhibit display. For the last half of June, we attended a series of trainings and conferences which culminated in us being officially commissioned as Rafiki Missionaries. Part of the training for our little cohort of eight missionaries-in-training was to learn how to cook from scratch. Not a lot of prepared foods in Africa! Jay learned how to make salad dressing from scratch and how to chop vegetables, but then spent most of his time exercising his talents in washing and sanitizing dishes and pots and pans. Foolishly, he asked the trainer if there was any iced tea or lemonade. Answer: you have lemons!

In regard to the Lord's other-than-physical splendor, we have seen Him work to prepare our path. Thanks to the support and pledges of future support from many of you as you respond to His leading, we are fully funded for our initial term! Because we were at the Rafiki

Home Office in Florida for training when many Rafiki Missionaries from the field were home for a conference as well as many retired Rafiki Missionaries, we had many insightful discussions and gained much wisdom from their practical experiences. In addition, we learned that there is a prayer group in Michigan of former Malawi Rafiki Missionaries and have zoomed with almost all of them as well. We had the privilege of spending training time with our missionary co-laborer, Anna, who will join us in Africa shortly after we arrive. Our huge checklist of things to do to the house has been largely accomplished, but with some lower priority items set aside until our friend, Steve, can tackle them. And he will be able to do that, since he and his wife, Robin, have moved in for the duration as our house sitters! Additionally, we met with the Elders of our sending church, and on the recommendation of the missions committee, they have approved us as missionaries; our commissioning by our church will be July 18. We could go on, but enough to say that the Lord is gracious and without question actively working to get us ready to go.

OK, you have been in suspense long enough. So, our work permits to Malawi have been delayed and Malawi has closed its borders recently due to an uptick in COVID infections. We knew this while we were attending training in Florida, and all the field missionaries that were home for the conference were fighting over us. “Send them to Ghana/Rwanda/Zambia to work with US!” Nice to be wanted. The decision has been made to send our little team to Africa on schedule, and we will serve in the Rafiki Village in Tanzania until Malawi opens back up. We will likely be

there for a few months, and then will move to Malawi as soon as we can. So, our departure on July 22 is still a GO! And we will once again be able to marvel at more of God's majesty by being greeted every morning with a close-up view of Mount Kilimanjaro at the edge of the Serengeti Plain where Rafiki Village Tanzania exists. But while that is nice and all, we long to be with "our" orphans and national workers in Malawi. They have prayed for us all the months of our preparation, waiting expectantly for us to join them.

**Praises**

- Our financial and prayer team support is in place for our first term!
- Our house disposition is settled! Lifelong friends will occupy it while building their own home nearby.

**Prayer Requests**

- *That we will be a help to the work in Tanzania as we learn our jobs there.*
- *That the Rafiki children and our national partners in Malawi will be protected from COVID.*
- *That we will soon be able to complete our move to Malawi.*
- *For continued good health. Almost all of the prior Malawi Rafiki Missionaries we have met contracted malaria while serving, regardless of taking anti-malarial medicine.*

Here are some pics of our latest adventures.



The missionary commissioning class with Rafiki Executive Director Karen Elliot (seated center). The right-most three are Team Malawi!



Zoom panelists for the Society for Classical Learning conference. Our topic was "Why leave the U.S. to teach in Africa?" Our missionary team partner is Anna on the far right. The couple in the middle are now serving with Rafiki in Uganda.



Saying goodbye, besides friends and family, includes favorite places like the National Lakeshore in northern Michigan.

Soli Deo Gloria!

With gratitude and love, both for you and the majestic work of our Lord,

*The Richards*

Maureen and Jay Richards  
3700 56th Street SW  
Wyoming MI 49418-9350

Our individual contacts:  
Jay: jay\_i\_richards@hotmail.com  
Maureen: ltcmaureen@hotmail.com

Cell: 616-916-3751

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