

Message 9. Samburu. Jan 3-9,2023

My last week in Kenya was especially joyous. Rosina, the first Samburu who has completed a Bachelors Degree in Theology at FTC travelled with me to Nakuru and we set off with Pastor Pamula Ngoya to Samburu. The road is now tarmac and only takes 4 hours, instead of 8. Instead of going to Maralal the provincial headquarters and stay in a hotel, we got off at Kisima and stayed at Rosina's brother's home.



Superb Starling



Brother and mother of Rosina

While in the mataru in Nakuru waiting for it to fill, I found a Happy Birthday message from a relative. We quickly bought a cake at the local supermarket and took it to Samburu. Mary and Naomi, the two USFW leaders I had met before were so eager they came a day early and welcomed us warmly. After receiving the customary tea, we opened the cake. We sang and laughed in abundant joy.(They had never tasted a whole slice of cake before). Staying locally instead of a hotel, enabled us to give more to the Samburu women. They even slaughtered and roasted a goat for us, as we sat around the campfire under the stars (a great honor).



Hide skin bed inside manyatta(we slept on mattresses instead). Manyatta and corral for cows, goats, and sheep

In the cool of the morning the next day, we walked crosscountry to Loltulelei church (instead of hiring pikis or a taxi.) It gave us some feel for the country and people. How many goats/sheep can you see?



Walking through the brush and fording the streams



All ears as women listen to teaching of Pam and Rosina

We had bought food, so they had both tea and bread upon arrival and a full meal including a goat. They rarely have more than 1 or two meals a day, and had not had rain for 3 years. The new director of Samburu Friends Mission is a Pentecostal (not a Friend) and all his women sat separate to eat until I invited all to eat together. We began by sharing that women are the majority in all churches and are vital to the life of a church and a community. I then invited all the men to join me outside where I shared my travel minute and asked them to write on it. Meanwhile, Pamela began a workshop teaching the women about reusable sanitary pads and Rosina translated and demonstrated how they are used. (Girls tend to just stay home claiming they are sick during their menses and thus often miss much school and often don't finish primary (elementary) education. They then were given some cloth, scissors, needles, and each eagerly made a pad set by hand. The room was full of joyous buzzing and conversation, as they worked together.



Joyfully sewing



Cooperation



They sewed in five groups, and eagerly shared with each other as they sewed.

After lunch, we asked them for feedback. They were so surprised to be given a chance to share their ideas, it took a while for them to share, but then they eagerly gave their feedback and shared ideas of a project they could do as a group. They want to keep making pads and teaching others, and since their talent is beadwork, they plan to create bags, scarves, and other decorated items to sell at the USFWI Triennial in Kabarak (Nakuru) in July, 2023.

On Sunday, we returned to Loltulelei. Pamela was asked to preach but instead, our team decided to have Rosina preach, as she could speak in Samburu and time would not be wasted in translating just for the two of us who didn't know Samburan. Traditionally, Samburan women are not accepted as leaders in their culture, but when Rosina preached all ages leaned forward eagerly listening to every word. About half came forward wanting further prayers from her. Even the male leaders saw the value of getting their women trained, and some came to her for advice and want her to continue returning to help her people.



The full group that attended the workshop, plus some male leaders who joined us for the food and worship meetings.

After the service, they presented us with gifts- their beaded headbands, and a Masai blanket. (they are northern Masai).



Tying beads on our heads(or bonnet) they had made.



Being wrapped in a Masai blanket

During the service, Naomi translated everything, Mary, the Chair of Samburu USFW led parts of the service, and the other Naomi prayed.



Active Loitulelei USFW Women leaders: Mary and the two Naomis with Rosina



Naomi leading us in prayer

Hopefully some of you will meet these women if you attend the USFWI /FUM Triennial in July.



Spontaneous line dance while bobbing heads



Loitulelei Sunday School wave greetings to you.

That afternoon, Pamela, Rosina, and I went to Maralal and slept in a Guest House, as Pamela and I had to leave on the early (3AM) bus to Nakuru. (Pamela had had one young man, plus the clerk of her church die suddenly, and I had to repack to return to USA). On the way we counted 10 rabbits, and two herds of zebra crossing the road that early morning. I was glad we did not meet elephants (but we saw them in the distance from Loitulelei the day before). I met with Pangani Young Friends. The next morning we walked into Nakuru National Park tha abuts Pangani Friends. Found the baboons were hungry, so they had jumped the fence and I saw one in the streets of the city looking for food scraps. Meanwhile Rosina stayed in Maralal, and bought some cloth and beads and returned to Loitulelei to make samples of the materials the women will sew for the Triennial Conference, before she returned to Kitale, where she is pastor.



Pangani Friends-borders National Park



Kids swing on trees



Walking into Park

I then boarded the Easy Coach to Nairobi, and met two Friends at Friends International Center, before continuing to the airport. Arrived by 8PM. The flight was to leave at 11:30PM, but we sat at the gate, and at 3AM were told the flight was cancelled (heating system problem), that we were to collect our bags, and buses would take all 400 of us to hotels and be rerouted to leave the next day. This required standing in line for 5 hours. Praise God, I was taken to the Ole Sereni Hotel that overlooks Nairobi National Park and I could watch a couple elephants, zebra, and gnus from my hotel room after some sleep.

I then was rerouted via Air France through Paris airport, took the bus to Concord, NH, and Janet, my good neighbor fetched me in a snow/rain mixture that night and delivered me home. I went to bed immediately, slept 11 hours and then got the wood stove working to warm up the house from 48degrees Farenheit to 63 degrees!

What a blessing, to have such a successful journey to Samburu to finish my ministry this time in East Africa. I am so grateful to all of you who have been supporting and praying for the journey. If any of you want me to come to your church/meeting to share more of the pictures and stories, do let me know. Hopefully, a couple of the pastors with whom I work will be coming to USA this summer who can accompany me.

With much gratitude,
Marian