

## Message 2. First week in Kenya—Travelling Women’s Workshop at FTC and Malava Nov.,2023

Greetings from rural western Kenya!

My first morning in Kenya, I was greeted by a rainbow, after the El Nino rains. Went by Easy Coach to Cheptulu where Elizabeth Mulimi welcomed me to her home. After a welcome cup of tea and great meal, I slept for ten hours.

On Wednesday morning, her husband drove me to Friends Theological College (FTC). They had recently graded the road into Kaimosi—like a plowed field of mud, the worst I had ever seen it. I delivered the rest of the graduation gowns and hoods to FTC. The hood from the late Marjorie Nelson Perisho, a famous woman medical doctor from Kokomo, Indiana, was given to Margaret Amudavi, to encourage her ministry as she tries to finish her doctorate. I did some final preparations for the workshop on my computer at Margaret’s house and ran through pouring rain and lightning to eat lunch at the dining hall. When we went back to her house it was on fire with smoke pouring out! The staff at FTC used three fire extinguishers to put out the fire. I saw the fire was in the ceiling. It was likely a combination of lightning and old electrical wiring. We then spent an hour rescuing the soot covered electronic equipment and moved our stuff to the neighboring guest house that Pat Shrock had built. That guest house is now well restored and repainted white, making it much lighter inside.



*The smoke of fire*



*QW TEAM of Quaker women Travelling in East .Africa Ministry*

That afternoon, I met with the Kenyan support committee who after all the confusion of heavy rains and fire, helped me refocus on the workshop and our ministries. As some say, "When people are doing good work, the devil will get jealous and try to prevent the ministry."

The workshop participants gathered for supper and after brief introductions, Agneta led us in a short epilogue, as many had traveled long distances.

The workshop was a real joy to all. I began the workshop on teaching about Accountability based on 1 John 1:5-7. Do we “walk the talk” or does our daily living match what is preached/taught to others? I gave examples of how the first African converts to Quakers would challenge each other to make sure their lives matched their preaching. I shared the need for transparency in finances, giving the example of how Zelika’s clear reporting of funds used in taking food regularly to Turkana desert people enabled a local meeting in New England to support her ministry. Lively discussion followed.

Later in the morning, Getry Agizah taught with many stories and examples all about transforming power (Alternatives to Violence) of how to prevent violence in times of crisis.

Nancy Wafula then taught us how to prevent illness and keep our bodies healthy, especially in terms of balanced diets and exercise. For exercise, we danced with joy and then choose someone we did not know with whom we walked around the compound (campus) to our evening tea. Nancy had arranged to feed us all balanced meals (with fruits and vegetables) throughout our time at FTC. Many expressed desire that all

these lessons be shared with their men and all leaders of Friends. In the late afternoon, several of us met with the two leaders from Uganda to plan out what we would be doing in Uganda in the next few months.

Margaret Musalia then had us end the evening in prayer for each other.

The last day, Margaret Amudavi led a training on Income generating projects. She had the basic principles of the lesson on a PowerPoint, and instead of giving examples of successful projects done by others, she led us in a practical discussion of how we could do a group income generating project as a group together to help in cost of holding our annual training workshop and assistance in travel in ministry outside our home areas. All the women had contributed money this past year to help pay for the workshop expenses, and had also all financially contributed to members who had lost any member of their nuclear family due to death. This year, since Linet Mmbone was about to marry, they also decided to contribute for wedding expenses, not just funerals. This led well into our business session. Sabina from Turkana was chosen as the treasurer for these welfare cases. It was a joy to see all the women taking part in joy, with no competition over leadership. After seeing the beaded scarf given to me by the Turkana women, we decided to have them make these scarves that will not be limited to any one yearly meeting or one event as one income-generating project. Nancy Wafula, our treasurer gave a very clear report of our finances, which was appreciated by all.

After sending the women off to their homes, Agneta and I got a ride from Pastor Shimala of Kakamega YM to Malava. We had a simple supper of just fresh greens from her garden and posho. Praise God, we all arrived safely in our homes throughout East Africa.

I slept solidly for a full night and spent the day washing my clothes, organizing the bags I had brought, and resting after the long journey and busy workshop.

Today after visiting Malakha, a small meeting on a hill near Malava, I travelled to Kimilili (near Kitale), to visit Marian Irungu (Elizabeth's daughter named after me) who is working at ICFEM hospital as a dietician. Here with electricity and Wifi available, I have been typing up this report as well as writing a report of the workshop and the Support Committee.

Thanks for all your prayers and support.

Marian



*Malakha Friends Meeting singing with joy. An equal number of children were outside under a tree for Sunday School.*