

Message 4. Short visits to Uganda and Tanzania. Nov. 24-Dec 2.

Greetings from green East Africa (due to the El Niño rains). For those who did not see my photo on Facebook, here is a photo taken while coming back from Nairobi to Kakamega.



*Greenery and two colorful flowers on trees in Migori (a native tree called Mudoto) and a hibiscus.*

I went to Nangoma, Uganda (southern Uganda bordering Kenya), with Agneta Injairu. We got caught in extremely heavy rain in Busia on the Kenyan border the day before (so heavy we could not see the other vehicles on the road), so we spent a night in a hotel instead of continuing into Uganda. We left Busia at 6:30am and took pikis across the border, and caught a matatu down to near Nangoma. Then on pikis to the meetinghouse. We quickly ate some breakfast we had carried just outside the meetinghouse and one by one, leaders came out to welcome us. Agneta goes regularly to Uganda to lift up the women (taking the place of late Eileen Malova). The previous month, Agneta had helped Nangoma prepare to host the Uganda Yearly Meeting Sessions, but due to three funerals in her home area in Malava, she missed the sessions and was going back to congratulate the Nangoma Friends for doing a good job on their own.



*The woman knelt in typical Ugandan custom and men and women were eager to learn more from Agneta.*



*Girl testifying while elders endorse the minute.*



*All ages dance with joy*

During the service that followed, I had my travel minute read, and explained its value to show accountability.

As the elders were writing on the minute, one young girl gave a testimony about how an unexpected donor enabled her to go to secondary school and complete her high school exams. She began singing and soon everyone was dancing with joy in response to this encouraging testimony. We then took pikis on a shortcut—a path, not a road—down to the main Kampala-Nairobi highway on one of the scariest motorcycle rides I’ve ever been on. We managed to reach the home of George Odoi, the newly appointed Clerk of Uganda YM, just before the afternoon rains came in force. As the head of a primary school, he is taking the new position seriously and is trying to visit all the meetings scattered across the country, so he will know whom he is leading.



*Agneta with George Odoi, his wife, and one of the sons.*



*White Egret in rice fields nearly*

The next journey was to Kaimosi to see a number of people at FTC. This included the father of Sylvia Wopicho (USFW President of Uganda), who has started a new meeting in Uganda. I also met with a number of the women on the executive committee of the Quaker Women Traveling Ministers Group. Jim Fussell from Baltimore YM, who is teaching there for a term, invited me into his Quakerism class to share with students there. I spent the night at the home Janet Mulama, one of the widows in our Traveling Ministers group, who lives in Kaimosi.





The next day, I met Agneta in Kisumu and we travelled down to Tqime, Tanzania, to visit Esinas Mwita. On the way past Kendu Bay, we enjoyed seeing the sail boats in Lake Victoria, as well as local fishing boats. Esinas, whose husband died two years ago, is a very active member of women in Tanzania YM. Since then she had a son murdered in Mombasa, a daughter who died of illness, plus lost one grandson. We felt she deserved a special visit and she was very excited to see us.

Then we visited Dorcas Simiti of Bware YM. She showed us around her shamba (lands). The maize (corn) was very tall, and the native grown ones were more bountiful than the hybrid varieties. We encouraged her to grow the native species of maize rather than hybrids. We also feasted on the bananas she had in abundance, and the rosemary that spiced the tea.



*Admiring the maize*



*The bountiful local variety, with multiple large ears per plant!*

Yesterday, we returned to Kakamega. While Agneta returned to her family, I went to visit the home of Elizabeth Irungu Malenje in Ebwambwa, where I often have stayed. This year, Elizabeth has spent most of her time running the family farm in Endebess on Mount Elgon after her brother suddenly passed away. I cooked up a Thanksgiving feast with those there and was able to collect some items that are usually stored there when I am back in USA. I found that the fish pond she had recently dug is now very full of fish, and she needs to find a way to reduce the population of tiny fish so that the others can grow to marketable size.



*Fish pond at Elizabeth's, all covered with netting to keep out birds and other people from poaching the fish.*

I am now spending a couple days washing, repacking, and resting before traveling to the USFW Conferences of both Tanzania YM and Uganda Yearly Meeting.

Thanks so much for all your messages, support, and prayers. In gratitude, Marian