

Message#4. Tanzania and Uganda 12-20 Nov. 2024

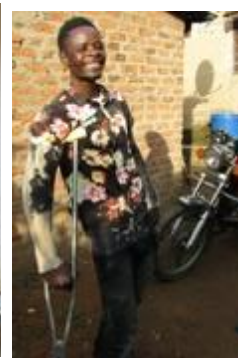
Margaret Musalia and I met in Kisumu and travelled all the way by matatu to Sirare, Tanzania. I found that as usual the system of crossing the border had changed. This time I discovered that my buying a multi-entry visa to enter Tanzania is good for a year, but you have to cross the border at least every three months, thus making my visa invalid already!). We spent the first evening visiting Esinas Mwita, an active Tanzania USFW woman who is an elder to all, who offers very gracious hospitality to all. She had a new tenant had created a large lion, which he sells to tourist hotels to support himself. She helped us get the bus to Mugumu, as Tanzania has now moved the bus parks in town to outside the towns (avoiding congestion).



*Lion created with clay.*



*Marian with Esinas admiring the art.*



*Artist*

The roads are improving but not finished, so it was four hours of bouncing along the detour tracks. The goldmines we passed were heavily guarded with armed soldiers. We were met by Margaret Joash and driven by Eunice's brother, first to see the widow of the late Paster Joshua, one of the first Kenyans who started Friends in Tanzania. We found the grave and paid respects, but found confusion, as they had left Friends and joined the Pentacostal church the last two years, and when he died, very few Friends came to his funeral service. We were grateful that Nicholas Otieno, at least gave the old pastor a brief funeral, rather than just burying that pioneer Friend as an unknown person.



*Grave of Pioneer Joshua*



*Margaret and I, plus Eunice and Margaret. Eunice's husband's grave*



We also visited Eunice's new house. Her husband had retired and built a new house in Mugumu, but then died suddenly. His funeral was a blessing to the many who came to support Eunice, the hardworking treasurer of the women. We were given a great meal, and Margaret delivered to Eunice a donation gathered from other Kenyan women who had been to Tanzania before, for which she was very grateful.

In the afternoon we went to Kisangura. There we found Mary Joseph in a beautiful new house built by her daughter whom she helped protect from circumcision and early marriage. She helped me connect to the secretary of Kisangura Child Development Fund, a group receiving aid from New York YM, who had not sent any report on how funds were used for several years. We found they pay school fees for the orphans and needy children to attend the Kisangura Friends primary and secondary schools. The manager has since moved far away, but I arranged to return a day early in December to visit the school and get the financial detailed report from the present manager. We then returned to Margaret Joash's home in



*Mary shows old hut to Margaret*



*Mary Joseph's new large house*



*Mary's Calla lily*



*Mountain of goldmine in distance*

Mugumu for the night. Since the male leaders of the yearly meeting, with the help of FUM, had changed last year, all the women leaders who had actively organized their annual conference, the new ones needed encouragement to work together and to attend the conference. Both Collins Ochieng, a Sunday school teacher) and Daniel Kitangani, (Tanzania YM General Secretary) heard we were there and came by briefly to see us.

On Thursday, we travelled back to the border and went to Dorcas Simiti's home in Migori. She has a heart for supporting all who are actively doing ministry. While there, a younger sunday school teacher from Bware came to see Margaret, and Phillip Ochieng, the first Luo Quaker who has started many new meetings among other tribes in Kenya and Tanzania came to see me. We had a wonderful time of sharing before we boarded a shuttle bus back to Kisumu and to Margaret's home in Mbale.

On Saturday, we visited Herman Otioko briefly (the Kenyan who worked 25 years in Turkana to build up those Friends in the desert) while on our way to the USFWK executive meeting. Herman was in bed and barely alive, but his wife rejoiced at our coming. I had been invited to the USFWK meeting to share briefly about the oral history project and ask them to help us find the older women who should be interviewed.



*Half of the top leaders of USFWK*



*Representatives from all 25 YM's attend the Executive Meetings*

Then I traveled on to Busia and met Agneta plus Christopher, a young pastor from Malava in Busia. On Sunday, we traveled via pikis all the way from the border to Nangoma meeting in Uganda. We find that visiting a meeting without telling them ahead of time, lets us know the real situation in any meeting. The newly built meetinghouse was quite full of people of all ages, with Rachel, an active woman pastor, guiding them.



*Nangoma Meetinghouse with Rachel plus a young man who translated from Busamia to English for visitors like us.*

We then travelled on to Mbale to visit Sylvia and Apollo Wopicho. The Ugandan women are well organized, ready for their annual conference in December.



*Four members in temporary meetinghouse.*



*We laugh as I use the hoe.*



*Sylvia Wopicho*



*Macadamia tree*

On Monday morning, Sylvia and Angel Wopicho escorted us to the home of her father, Nimrod. He is a retired head teacher who decided to spend the rest of his life in ministry with Friends and had enrolled in FTC (Friends Theological College) to learn more of Quakerism. He has donated land and built a temporary meetinghouse, in an area where there have been no meetings. I enjoyed seeing the view through the frame of the meetinghouse, and fresh breeze blowing through. We then walked onto the site where the permanent church will be built. He has been growing Macadamia trees and teaching other Kenyans about their nuts that are exported to USA. We each used a hoe (maddock) to mark the corner of the new building. We were then given a live chicken, and two large bunches of bananas from his land. Apollo drove us to Lwakhakha, where we walked across the border back into Kenya. The only transport we could get was a cement lorry from Uganda that took us to Kabrengu. We arrived in Butali, Kenya just as it was dark, and were very grateful to have a friend of Agneta's to drive us to her home in Kalenda.

After so much travelling, it was a joy to sleep early, and spend today unpacking, washing all my clothes by hand, and writing up reports. Thanks so much for all your support and prayers. Surely the traveling via public transport can always use your prayers.

In gratitude, Marian