

After two days of resting at Agneta's, on Thursday, the 16th, I took off via piki to Kakamega and Bluemark matatu to Kisumu. There I met with Margaret Musalia and we travelled via shuttle down to Emusunza (near Migori) where we were warmly welcomed by Dorcas Simiti. Margaret prayed with Dorcas, and counselled one of her sons and a grandson who had caused some troubles.

The next morning, we took matatus to the Tanzanian border and boarded a bus to Mugumu. It took many hours, was very overcrowded (standing and sitting) and stopped in many villages for more to get onto the bus. Went past the diamond mines that are well guarded, and there seemed to be new mines opening up. Finally reached Mugumu just before dark and were warmly welcomed by Margaret Joash, Treasurer of USFW Tanzania.



Margaret Joash

Maribou Storks in Mugumu!

Pillars of Church-with cut iron rods

On Saturday, we held a meeting with a group of the USFW Tanzania officers, and had the official Clerk, Rosta joined us via speaker phone. She lives near the border of Malawi (a 3- to 4-day bus ride away, and internet and electricity are not always available or reliable for many. They went over the program they had planned for their annual Conference of women, and agreed to hold it the first week of December in Buhongwa, (Mwanza). They welcomed us to return to visit the conference. They feel confident they can run the conference themselves. They have their main speaker, and will choose the topics they want to discuss as women in their culture.

They asked any Kenyans to assist in the cost of transport for a few who have to travel multiple days to arrive at the site from distant parts of Tanzania, but they do not need Kenyans or others to do all the teaching/preaching/ organizing of the gathering. It was a joy to see them feeling confident they could run the conference themselves, instead of depending on those of us from outside their country.

Margaret Joash, our hostess, had been given the honor of receiving a solar lamp at last year's conference, but they had not written her history statement or completed printing the official certificate in time for last year. Thus, she invited the other USFW leaders, her local meeting, and her family to come celebrate and finish the ceremony at her house. The morning was spent preparing a feast. Meanwhile, Margaret and I sang and played games with the grandchildren. Margaret Joash was escorted like a bride in a dancing procession, singing with joy. Her history was read and the certificate was given to her, followed by wrapping her in colorful leis. Musalia had carried several extra leis, so we each gave her one and then Margaret gave one to the elderly husband who had allowed his wife to travel and be active in USFW leadership. He beamed with joy at being included and it was like celebrating a 50th wedding anniversary. In their tradition, they love honoring others by wrapping them with colorful lengths of beautiful new cloths—more than I was able to count—while others donated money. We finished with prayers of thanksgiving and then feasted together.



Lighting the solar lamp



The happy couple with their proud son behind them.

We also visited Mugumu Church. They had done a good job repairing the old building, the first meetinghouse built in Tanzania, but have begun a larger meetinghouse. When they erected some pillars, unfortunately someone vandalized and cut some of their iron rods (see in photo above).

On Sunday, we were invited to Kebesonga Friends Meeting. They have a large building built many years ago, but recently done a lot of plastering, painting, etc., so it looks new. They had invited me to officially open the church and had even created a plaque for me to unveil! There were a couple of men in front, a couple of young men in back, but otherwise the congregation of around 100 was half women and half children, then invited the teens and young Friends to come sing/dance, (like a typical Tanzanian choir), and then gave a short message to the adults. They were so grateful to have us present, that to our surprise, they wrapped each of us in a colorful cloth! Margaret Musalia was asked to preach, so she first told a Biblical story to the youth.



Women leaders (all in blue)
standing by the plaque that I officially
unveiled.

Margaret Musalia is in pink, and the
elder, Mama Maria John is in the green.

We then began the long bus ride back to Tarime near the border. It turns out the porridge they had fed us had been fermented and my body reacted to it. As a result, that journey was uncomfortable to me. We finally reached the home of Esinas Mwita (who is still in Dar es Salaam Hospital, but healing) and welcomed by one of her sons. I was grateful that my body expelled the porridge, and I finally was able to relax and sleep the night.

The next day, we journeyed well back across the border to Kisumu. There, by mistake we boarded a vehicle marked Kitale express. After sitting over one hour in the extreme heat of the city until filled, the vehicle left the bus park, but immediately began overfilling the vehicle and stopping at every village along the way taking close to 4 hours instead of the usual 1 or 1-1/2 hours to reach Kakamega. I reached Malava around 5:30 p.m. in the rain, but was grateful to find the older, trusted slow piki driver ready to carry me back to Agneta's.

I spent the next two days just resting, washing clothes, and making plans for the next travels. Meanwhile, several of her grandchildren arrived home from school. (During national exams, those not in the had been examination class were sent home for the holidays.)

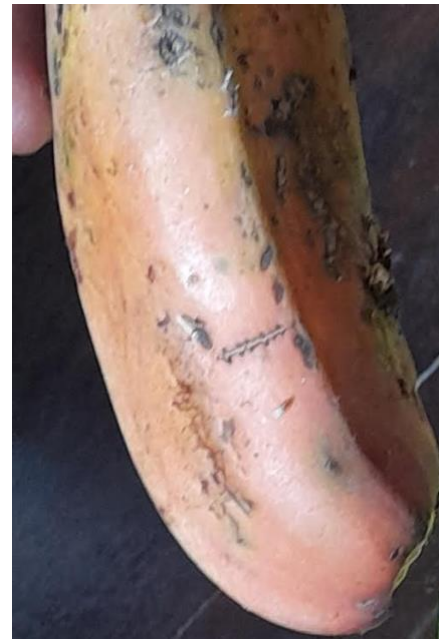
I went to Bukura on the to visit Miriam and Humphrey Were. They were excited to see me and welcomed me warmly. Miriam is now elderly, so I was advised to work with her son David in Nairobi to help get her autobiography published. On the way back to Kakamega, we visited her younger sister, Elizabeth Malesi, and enjoyed eating a red banana. Elizabeth then joined us, as they had to attend a funeral of a relative after dropping me in Kakamega. I then returned to Agneta's and repacked.



Miriam Were, I, and Elizabeth Malesi



Hibiscus tree flowers at Miriam's yard



Red banana

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