

Message 5: Kenya and Uganda, 27 Oct–4 Nov

On Sunday the 26th, Agneta escorted me via piki to Shirugu Friends Church and I travelled on along up to Kiminini where Rose Afandi (wife of John Muhanji) collected me to visit their farm in Muliro, (near Kitale). They have a large two-story home surrounded by trees and many birds. On Monday morning, Rose had invited me to her local Friends Church for morning prayers. She asked me to speak to the small gathering about missions. When I spoke all in Swahili they were very surprised and listened very intently. I shared very briefly about the work we are doing helping others in Uganda and Tanzania and encouraged them to reach out to their neighbors. With the help of their friend, Eloise Hockett, from Oregon, Rose has been helping a local primary school and we delivered a meal to feed the 106 students who were in the midst of doing national exams there. Then she drove me to Samson and Edith Wekesas, and I spent the next four hours in encouraging of each other in our different ministries. Edith was so encouraged she tried walking a few steps while I was there and was able to get into their car with some help. Samson and Edith then took me to Kitale to connect with John Muhanji who was finishing a meeting of FUM Africa Finance Committee. He took me back to their home, driving more slowly than he usually does due to the rain and muddy roads.



Rose and John Muhanji at their front door.



Grade 6 candidates getting lunch

The next morning, John dropped me off in Kitale and I returned to Agneta's and quickly repacked ready to go to Uganda on Wednesday the 29th. I had picked up a cold from one of her grandchildren, so slept early and took extra Vitamin C that chased the cold away.

On the 29th Agneta and I travelled to Busia and met Pastor Margaret Musalia from Mbale and Pastor Pamela Ngoyaf rom Nakuru. They had arrived early and waited hours for us to arrive. Meanwhile, they helped calm down a woman who was shouting and screaming. They used their skills from AVP Training (Alternatives to Violence), to calm everyone down. We then travelled on to Mbale, Uganda to the home of Rose and Steven Wamboka ,who had recently lost a mother.

Meanwhile, Sabina Natoo and Grace Losike from Lodwar(Turkana), and joined Evelyn Nuknambi from Kitale. They arrived just as it got dark at the Lwakhakha border of Uganda. It was too late for them to get means on to Mbale, so we helped they connect with George Wamnashi and Alfred and Centrine Wasike from Shibuse Meeting nearby, who hosted them and sent them to join us for breakfast in Mbale. We then prayed with them and gave them an "envelope" that contained the money that fellow travelling ministers had collected to support them. Then we went to the home of Sylvia Wopicho, the leader of Uganda USFW Women, who hosted us all. Four other women arrived from FTC (Kaimosi) and Kakamega, and we began our annual meeting of the QWTEAM (Quaker Women Travelling in East Africa Ministries. We spent a day hearing the stories (testimonies) from each one gathered. We also sang and prayed and gave support to each other. We also had a moving time sharing with Edith Wasike, who joined us via speaker phone, since she cannot walk or travel right now.



Handing over the envelope. The team with Sylvia, our host in front

After lunch on Saturday, ten of us travelled back to Busia, with four of us branching north towards Kitale, and five going toward Kakamega and Kisumu. I went with the northern group. Margaret Amudavi, Nancy Wafula and I were collected by Robert Wafula. Since we arrived there at 8 p.m., we ate a simple supper—cooked greens and brown ugali (cornmeal porridge)—at a local restaurant by candlelight (due to a temporary loss of electricity during the heavy rain) before driving through rain and mud to their homes. We dropped Margaret off at her home in Kimilili, and i went with the Wafulas to their farm towards Chwele. Meanwhile, Evelyn travelled on to Kitale.

On Saturday, I walked around the farm seeing the geese, guinea fowl, turkeys, chickens, goats, and cows, and even a wild rabbit that moved faster in large leaps than a neighboring farmers dog who tried to chase it. We were accompanied by a very active 2-year-old son of the caretaker who calls Robert "Gukha" (grandpa), and who called me "Nyanya," which means either tomato or grandmother in Swahili. In the afternoon, we visited Nancy's mother, who was delighted to meet a wazungu (white person) who could speak Swahili, and we chatted away and sang as two women of similar age.



Robert Wafula with the 2-year-old, inside and outside on their farm

On Sunday I visited a Friends Meeting in Bungoma. It was located next to a Pentacostal Church city that had had a split. Instead of finishing building their church, both groups met outside under tents singing and preaching loudly (with microphones at full volume) in competition with each other. It made those in the neighboring churches get headaches from the noise.



One unique thing in Bungoma was the large Quaker men's chorus, the largest I had seen in Kenya

On the way back to the farm, we stopped at Robert's mother home where they held a family meeting during which I took a short nap. The 2-year-old cried when we left the next morning.

On Monday morning, they were on the way back to FTC in Kaimosi and decided to drive me all the way to Agneta's home in Kalenda, Kabras. It is useful for colleagues to visit each other's homes and understand more where each other come from. I found Agneta's grandsons all busy preparing the greens for supper and drying out the beans just harvested.

Yesterday, I went to Kakamega doing errands, including getting some UHT milk, since the cow's milk has stopped flowing until it delivers its next calf. Today I went to Getry Agizah's home in Matsakha to get wifi and be able to send this off to you all. (Matsakha is closer to Agneta's home than Kakamega).



Plucking greens for supper.

Thanks for all the messages and support.

In gratitude,
Marian