

Message #6 Greetings from Uganda Dec 12-17, 2019

In late November, I sent Alfred Wasike, the general secretary of Uganda to Kigumba in northwest Uganda to finally get rid of the many jiggers that were preventing kids from attending the Friends Primary (elementary) School. They removed all the jiggers from the kids and redid the floors of the old classrooms built back in the 1980's.



Alfred removing some jiggers from a school girl



Little boy is happy to get rid of jiggers

On the 12th of December, I travelled with Eileen Malova (Kakamega), Ruth Mwengu (Kitale), Elizabeth Malesi Kinaro (Kakamega), Roselyn Amugune (Kakamega) and Sarah Anusu (Tuloi) to Mbale, Uganda for the USFW (Womens) Conference.

It was a joy to find 5 women from Lutulu (located on Lake Victoria in southern Uganda) and 4 from Kimidi of Busoga region and 4 from western Uganda (Semuto) already there. We started the conference with a great deal of joy to have people from all over the country present. Unfortunately, the ones from the eastern side of Uganda, (where Quakerism entered the country), were slower to arrive and irregular in attendance at the conference. The ones up on Mt Elgon were delayed due to mudslides and a number of funerals resulting from the previous torrential rainstorms.



Kimidi women greeting the conference



Mutoto women singing

We sang in many different languages (mother tongues) and when the women from Lutulu wrapped the traditional cloths around their posteriors (the traditional way of dancing), everyone joined in dancing with great joy and laughter.



Lutulu women dancing and singing joyfully



Semuto women singing

Juliet Namono, the only trained Friends woman pastor in Uganda, was the main speaker on Luke 5:4 Reach out into the deeper water. She brought a trio of women to sing with her (pictured above in light grey dresses). Elizabeth Kinaro led a session on family violence issues, Judith Nandikove on women empowerment, Roselyn Amugune on how to raise teenagers, and Eileen Malova on Women of Substance. The men leaders of Uganda, visited and sat in the back listening and encouraging the women. As usual there were a number of children who came in to sing and dance during break times who enjoyed getting to use the microphone and eating the leftover food.



The women of Uganda listening to one of the speakers



Children jumping rope outside

The women of Mbale, led by Sylvia Wopicho, the presiding clerk, did a great job of preparing the food, hosting, etc. They provided more balanced meals than usual of matoke (the traditional cooked bananas) or posho, meat/fish/beans and cooked greens. We feasted on ripe pineapples that were in season locally.

The last day, the women announced that they were going to meet next year in Bukoyi, a village on the eastern edge of Uganda that has rarely come to any of the women's conferences or trainings, such as the one for Sunday Schools we had provided (even though they had over one hundred kids coming into and disturbing the last conference we held there). The last day, the nominating committee introduced the new leaders- almost all from one tribe in Uganda, and kicked out most of the active leaders who have worked hard to build up the USFW in Uganda. We will need to train all these new leaders, and will need prayers for dealing with this unexpected turn of events.



Old officers- Sylvia Wopicho on right (yellow)

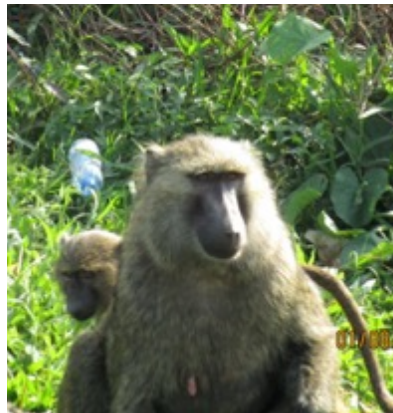


New officers with Corretti Mutukia on right(in blue)

After the conference, I traveled with Sarah to Kimidi to meet with the women's group that plan to plant hot peppers, coriander, garlic, and ginger, all things that are wanted but less often grown. They also will try growing cowpeas and dry them to sell during the season when few fresh vegetables are available. (They eat the leaves, rather than the beans). We had to walk on an extremely wet, slippery lane due to this month's heavy rains. Most took off their shoes, and I was glad to have practical brown hiking shoes. Many very large baboons sat along the roadside on our way as we rode back to Kenya in a matatu.



Kimidi womens group



Baboons along roadside

We all arrived back home in Kenya by last night. It was wonderful to have a day of bright sun to dry all the clothes we had washed. Thanks for your support and prayers.

I had expected to go tomorrow to Nairobi for a couple days to do preparation work for the African archives, but found I could not get any regular buses to return before Christmas due to the migration of many people back to their villages of origin for the holidays (when many drivers work overtime, and many accidents happen). Thus I decided it was wiser to stay in Kakamega and get a couple days of rest instead and to use phone and email to work on the archives preparation.

May all of you have a enjoyable Christmas holiday season.
Marian