

Message 5- Thanksgiving and Tanzania USFW Conference Nov 28-Dec 9-“Colorful Thanksgivings”

On Thanksgiving Day, my namesake Marian helped me prepare a special meal for the family. Since turkeys are rare here, we roasted a chicken and I made stuffing. Celery can only be bought in 3 bunches lot, so I made stuffing, plus celery soup. We also had winter squash(called pumpkin here), peas and carrots. Marian arranged the tropical fruits I had bought into a colorful arrangement and baked a tricolored cake- chocolate, strawberry, and banana for desert along with homemade yogurt. The two young men present still had to have their traditional ugali (maizemeal) in addition.



Marian making cake



Serving stuffing



Fruit and tricolored cake

On the 1st of December, I travelled to Kaimosi and spent a night at the home of Janet Mulama, the woman pastor who was going with us to Tanzania for the first time. Early in the morning, I had a time of sharing with Robert Wafula, Principal of Friends Theological College making plans for the upcoming visit of the Quaker archivist from Haverford College (who will be coming in January to help us start a Quaker archives for Africa). Graciously, as it began to pour rain heavily, Robert sent one of his staff to fetch Janet and to drive us both to Mbale, where we could get a public vehicle towards Tanzania. We travelled the rest of the day in the rain through a lot of construction and detours to Migori where Pamela Ngoya and Margaret Musalia joined us. Judith Nandikove came on her own the next day.

On the 2nd, we walked across the border and stopped in Tarime to pick up two women on our way to the USFW women’s conference. There were double the usual number of women gathered, and they had come from all over the country, including Dar es Salaam and from the border of Congo. Many of them were young women. Dorcas Otieno was the main speaker and did a great job speaking to the condition of women there. It was a joy to watch the leaders (whom we had been teaching for several years), organize and run the whole conference well by themselves. Many of us slept in an empty teachers house at the Friends School next door. We were greeted by a 6inch long millipede on the floor the next morning!



Janet assists Dorcas, the main speaker



The dancing choir

In between lessons, a choir of 20 young people danced as they sang, acting out what they were singing about. I taught one lesson on mobilizing resources for a meeting/church and one on Friends testimonies. On Saturday afternoon, they had a lot of fun honoring a woman of substance. They chose a poor 89 year old widow who lived in a hut with a leaking roof, yet who was very faithful in attendance and helpful to her local Friends Meeting. When we built the roof on her church last year, she didn't have the physical strength to help build, so she helped by making and bringing cups of porridge to feed the workers. She was dressed in a simple white cotton dress, and was led into the church by a procession of women, singing and dancing. They then gave her a certificate, wrapped her in colorful leis and a blanket and gave her a solar lamp. It was the first time she had ever been honored, and was overwhelmed with joy. Everyone was dancing with such joy and vigor, it was hard to get clear photos. In addition others took up an offering to help her fix her roof.



Pauline receiving the lamp



Pauline with certificate



Chief dancing with us

Then they surprised Margaret Musalia who had been coming down to help them for years. After a procession while waving branches of trees, they gave her a special certificate and wrapped her in a colorful cloth. They also wrapped each of us teachers with colorful cloths. What joy! The parents of the one Tanzanian who taught about health and HIV posed proudly with their daughter. The local chief, a Quaker, also jumped into many of the photos, showing his gratitude for us coming.



Margaret honored



Mary, USFW Clerk



Proud parents of Eunice, first Tanzanian teacher

I was shown the 400 trees they had planted in October on Quaker Day. A local women's cooperative group brought Zucchini's they had grown. Since then I have taught several women how to cook them and we feasted with Elizabeth on the ones I'd brought from Tanzania this evening. We left in pouring rain on Sunday afternoon and traveled to Migori and spent the night at Dorcas and Fanuel Simiti, whom some of us have known for many years. What a warm welcome we received from them, and as they are housebound due to Fanuel's illness, they were eager to hear news of Tanzanian Friends.

On the way back, Dorcas Otieno lost her bag that contained all her documents and money. For financial accountability I had been having the conductor of each vehicle we used sign their names and number of their vehicle on a receipt I'd written (as most do not offer receipts). Dorcas was able to use the numbers to find the driver and retrieve her bag the next day, and the writing of many receipts was no longer a burden. Then when we had a dangerously fast matatu driver, I was grateful for the potholes in the road that forced the driver to slow down.

We all arrived safely home and are thankful for the growth of the Tanzanian women. Thanks for your support. We will return to Uganda tomorrow for their USFW conference. Marian



Pamela receives cloth



Grevilla tree planted



Dorcas receives cloth