To Friends Everywhere

Dear Friends,

We send Greetings from the Friends Church of Uganda (Quakers).

We, more than 420, delegates from Uganda, Kenya & the USA have come together as a Yearly Meeting. We had representatives from the FUM, FWCC, USFW, YFP, YQCA and the Quaker Men International.

Our Presiding Clerk Paul Kuloba welcomed the delegates & opened the conference.

This is the 32nd Session held in this venue for the second time in a row.
This venue is very historic because Quakerism spread from Kenya into Uganda through Sibuse. By 1945 there were vibrant Quaker Churches in Sibuse & Nabiswa to the east, Kigumba to the west & Nangoma & Kampala to the central.

The venue, a recently constructed Church is set in the lush foothills of Mt Elgon (below). It is 5km from the Uganda/Kenya Lwakhakha border & 37 km to Mbale, the regional capital of Eastern Uganda. Politically, it is located in Bubutu Sub County, Namisindwa District.

Generally, the people of Sibuse are friendly. The climate is cool due to ample rainfall plus normal sunshine that favours & supports organic agriculture especially food production including very delicious fruits.
Our theme was from: Matthew 4:19b “Fishers of Men.”

The main speaker Dr. Robert J. Wafula eloquently taught us three ways in which we can influence people to come to Christ by our ATTITUDE (1 Peter 3:15), ACTIONS (Matthew 5:16) & WORDS.

He urged us to:

• Lay aside our personal ambition and plans in order to fully follow Christ.
• Purpose in our life to better reflect the light of Christ to those around us.
• Look for and take opportunities to share with others what Jesus has done for us. Jesus said “Follow me and I will make you Fishers of Men.”

We have listened to and discussed other topics including Quaker Nature & Stewardship, Church Planting, Christians Giving, Christian Family, HIV/AIDS/Health, Repentance, Discipleship, Mission & Evangelism, among others.
We were blessed by international visitors. A team from Kenya (Chwele YM, East Africa YM North, Kakamega YM, Lugulu YM, Vokoli YM. We have also received visitors from the FUM/AMO in Kisumu, Kenya. Shawn McConaughey & his wife Katrina are visiting Uganda for the first time. Shawn spoke about Church Planting. With the couple was Kenneth Saina, the FUM/AMO/FTC Business Manager. We also hosted the FWCC Africa Section Clerk Bainito Wamalwa who urged Friends in Africa to observe the World Quaker Day on October 7, 2018. With him were the General Secretary of Friends Evangelical Church Kenya Job Bikokwa plus the Quaker Men International Vice President George Namiti.
We had very happy & historic moments here. Katrina & Shawn visited Uganda for the first time. A Kenyan Sunday School Teacher who left Uganda in 1976 returned to testify on how President Idi Amin messed up the Church in Uganda. One of our pastors in Northern Uganda in jail since January 13, 2018 & “freed” on August 13, 2018, testified about how he was framed with charges of aggravated robbery. Our Friends John Muhanji (FUM/AMO Director) & Colin Saxton (Former FUM General Secretary) honoured their pledges of chairs for the Sibuse Friends Church.
42 YEARS LATER: Mercelline Mirembe returns to Uganda. Her husband, Javan Mirembe & her left after ex-President Idi Amin (1971-1979) banned the Friends Church in Uganda. Javan (now 84) worked with the East African Community in Kampala while his wife, Mercelline (now 75) taught in Norman Gordinho Primary School (now Buganda Road PS) in the same city. She testified that they lived in Uganda from 1968 to 1976. She added that while in Kampala, they worshipped at Nakawa Friends Church (Kampala Quarterly Meeting) where she taught Sunday School. She recalled: “The current Friends Church of Uganda (Quakers) General Secretary Alfred Wasike (right) was a very active & very well behaved member of my Sunday School…” It was a very happy reunion at the Conference!
BRUTALISED PREACHER: Pastor Samuel Ayal (66) touched the congregation with his testimony about how family members plotted with police to arrest & frame him with charges of aggravated robbery, January 13, 2018 & have him jailed in Lira, Northern Uganda. He recalled that inspite of his advanced age, he was severely tortured. He was forced to sell off his land & other property to “buy” his freedom. The Friends Church of Uganda (Quakers) General Secretary Alfred Wasike plus some Friends including Marian Baker (left) from New England Yearly Meeting (USA) visited him in custody in April 2018 & found him preaching to other inmates. We have prayed for his freedom since but he is shackled with needs including schooling necessities for his four orphaned grandchildren. His son died in 2013. We are praying for his tight situation.
HONoured Pledges: John Muhanji & Colin Saxton visited Sibuse Friends Church when Colin was doing his last tour of duty in Africa. They pledged 50 chairs. Friends Church of Uganda (Quakers) ex-Clerk Apollo Wopicho (above) & FUM/AMO Business Manager Kenneth Saina went shopping for the chairs. Dr. Wafula sanctified them. Shawn & Kenneth handed the chairs to the Village Meeting Pastor Andrew Kurima & Sibuse Quarterly Meeting Clerk George Wamashu, amidst jubilation. We thank you Muhanji & Colin. We also thank other local contributors to furniture here.
ABOVE: THE NEW CHAIRS AT WORK
BELOW: Vote of Thanks to Our Friends by General Secretary Alfred Wasike (right)
Clerk Paul Kuloba (below left) chaired a special General Board Meeting at our nearby Sibuse Friends Primary School on September 1, 2018 to deliberate on several issues for the Annual Conference. Rebranding & Re-registering the Friends Church of Uganda (Quakers) featured highest:

Here are some of the General Board Members present:
The 2018 Annual Conference is also historic because the Friends Church (Quakers) is rebranding. This is not by choice. It is a statutory requirement by the Government of Uganda. The new regulation requires that only state agencies are to have their names starting with UGANDA. In other words, all Churches & other organisations like ours have to change their names.

This means a total overhaul of all documents beginning with our Constitution. To this direction, the Executive Committee of the Yearly Meeting sat on July 28, 2018 in Mbale, eastern Uganda at the headquarters of the Friends Church of Uganda (Quakers) & mandated the General Secretary to undertake this task in readiness for the General Board & eventually the Annual Conference. This was done. The “revised” Constitution was presented to the General Board on September 1, 2018. The General Board approved the new name: FRIENDS CHURCH OF UGANDA (QUAKERS) for presentation to the Annual Conference. The Annual Conference finally ratified it. So we are compiling documentation for the fresh registration of the Friends Church in Uganda.
OUR OTHER FUTURE PLANS

We prayed for the volatile political situation in East Africa especially in Uganda where the Government has come down hard with a very heavy hand on the opposition leading to deaths of unarmed civilians, the economic crisis in Kenya, the escalating refugee crisis in South Sudan, the DRC, the terrorism from Somalia and beyond.

We decided that the 33rd Friends Church of Uganda (Quakers) Annual Conference will be held at Kimidi Friends Primary School near Bugiri town (off the Busia to Jinja highway) from August 28 – September 1, 2019.

The USFW Uganda Clerk Sylvia Wopicho announced that the 22nd USFW Uganda Annual Conference will be held at Mutoto Friends Church in Mbale from December 12 – 16, 2018 under the theme PEACE & RECONCILIATION (Hebrews 12:14b).

The YFP Uganda Clerk Peter Kutto announced that the YQCA Conference will be held at St Andrews Cathedral Mbale, Uganda from December 19 – 23, 2018.

The YFP Uganda Annual Conference will be held in Friends Primary School Kimidi from January 9 – 13, 2019.

Uganda is also scheduled to host a high-level FWCC Africa Meeting at Jinja from December 27 to 30, 2018.

BELOW IS PART OF OUR VERY SPACIOUS VENUE FOR THE 33rd FRIENDS CHURCH OF UGANDA (QUAKERS) ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Very supportive Kimidi Friends Primary School & Friends Church administrations plus very helpful Friends like Marian Baker (New England Yearly Meeting USA)

Marian Baker (left) helps the Friends Church of Uganda to mobilise Youth & other Community Members by playing football at Kimidi Friends School. She also helps with Sunday School Teacher Training.
A very productive Kimidi Women’s Group is engaged in agriculture to fight poverty in their households.

They plan their work......and they need our support......
The blue circles represent some locations of Quaker presence in Uganda (Mbale Friends Church is the headquarters)

Prepared by:

General Secretary: Alfred Wasike

Endorsed by:

Presiding Clerk: Paul Kuloba

September 2018

God bless You All