

EPISTLE FROM THE UGANDA YEARLY MEETING (UYM) FRIENDS CHURCH (QUAKERS)

August 30 – September 3, 2017

To Friends everywhere

Dear Friends,

We send greetings from the Uganda Yearly Meeting (UYM).

We (more than 250 Quakers from Uganda, Kenya & Rwanda) have come together from August 30 to September 3, 2017 as a Yearly Meeting at Sibuse Friends Church.

The UYM Presiding Clerk Paul Kuloba welcomed the delegates to the conference. This is the 31st Session.

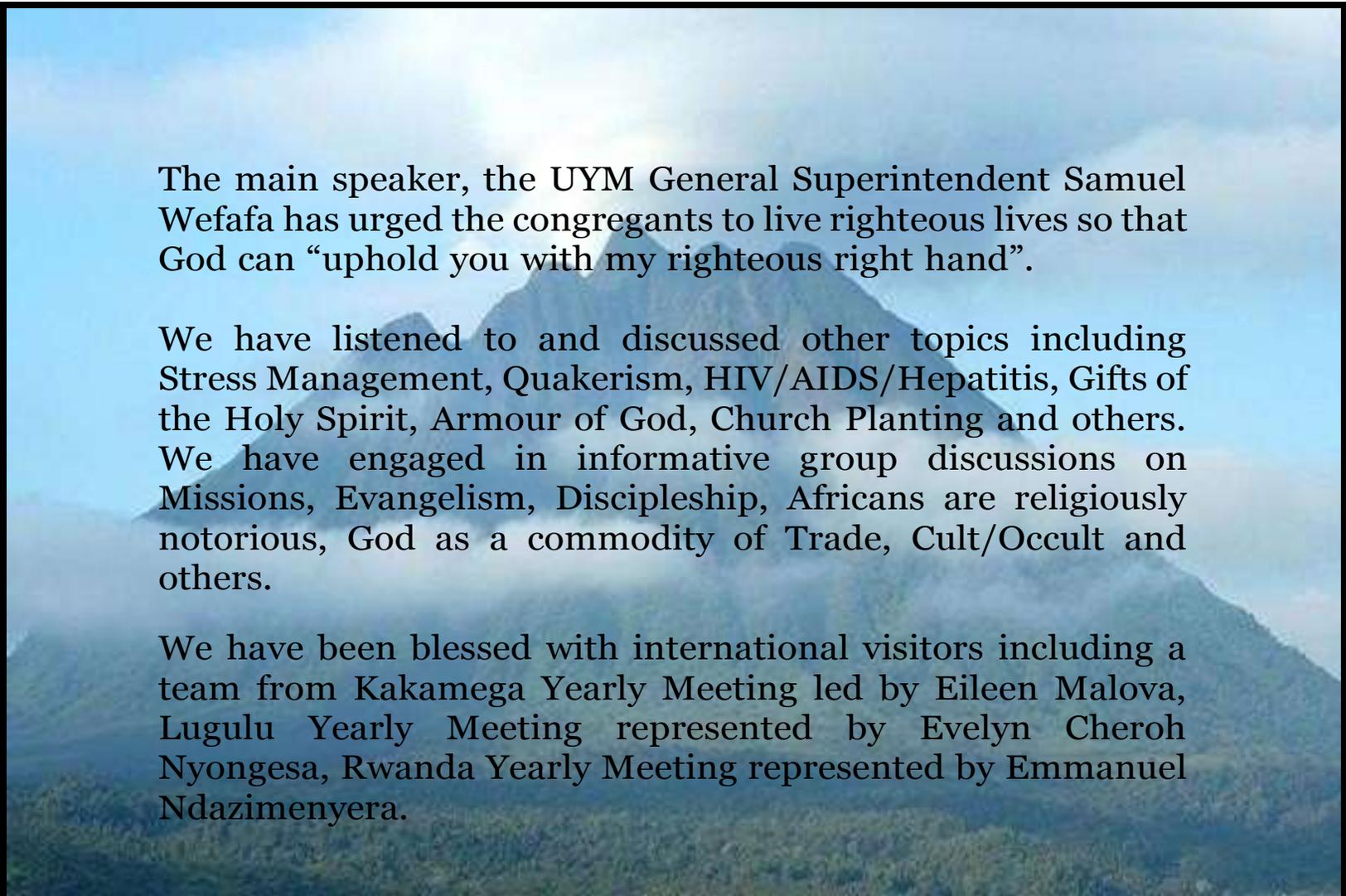


It is a very historic conference because Quakerism spread into Uganda from Sibuse. By 1945, there were Quaker churches in Sibuse and Nabiswa to the East, Kigumba to the West and Nang'oma and Kampala to the Central by 1948.



The venue, the newly constructed Church, a 500-seater is set in the lush foothills of the Mt. Elgon (**below**). It is 5km from the Uganda/Kenya Lwakhakha border and 37km to Mbale, Uganda's Eastern regional capital. Politically, it is located in Bubutu Sub-County, Namisindwa District.

Our theme has been **“I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” (Isaiah 41:10).**



The main speaker, the UYM General Superintendent Samuel Wefafa has urged the congregants to live righteous lives so that God can “uphold you with my righteous right hand”.

We have listened to and discussed other topics including Stress Management, Quakerism, HIV/AIDS/Hepatitis, Gifts of the Holy Spirit, Armour of God, Church Planting and others. We have engaged in informative group discussions on Missions, Evangelism, Discipleship, Africans are religiously notorious, God as a commodity of Trade, Cult/Occult and others.

We have been blessed with international visitors including a team from Kakamega Yearly Meeting led by Eileen Malova, Lugulu Yearly Meeting represented by Evelyn Cheroh Nyongesa, Rwanda Yearly Meeting represented by Emmanuel Ndazimenyera.

We also hosted the new FWCC (Friends World Committee for Consultation) Africa Section Clerk, Bainito Khayongo Wamalwa who introduced the new FWCC Africa Section Chairperson for Publications & Literature, Alfred Wasike (also UYM General Secretary). Both were nominated into those positions by the FWCC Africa Section Triennial, April 2017, Kigali, Rwanda.

We have also hosted the Principal of the Friends Theological College, Dr. Robert Wafula, his wife Nancy and their Friends from Chwele Yearly Meeting.

All our visitors have encouraged us to live in unity and righteously as per our theme: "I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." (Isaiah 41:10).

**UGANDA YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS CHURCH (QUAKERS)
31ST GENERAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2017**

**VENUE : SIBUSE QUATERLY MEETING
(NAMISINDWA REGION - MBALE - LWAKHAKHA ROAD)
@ MUNAMBA TRADING CENTRE**

THEME : PROPHET ISAIAH 41:10 *I will uphold you with my righteous right hand!"*

DATE : AUGUST 30TH - SEPTEMBER 3RD , 2017

MAIN SPEAKER : SENIOR PASTOR SAMUEL N . WEFAFA

This banner is a donation from the
late Mzee Peter Wasike Family

We prayed for the "delicate" political situation in East Africa especially in Kenya, the ever rising refugee crisis in South Sudan, the terror from Somalia, Burundi, other parts of Africa and the rest of the world.

We have decided that the 32nd UYM Annual Conference is to be held in the same venue from August 29 – September 2, 2018.

The USFW UG Clerk Sylvia Wopicho announced that the 21st USFW UG Conference is to be held from December 13 – 17, 2017 at Butuwa Friends Church, Manafwa District under the theme OBEDIENCE from 1st Samuel 12:14.

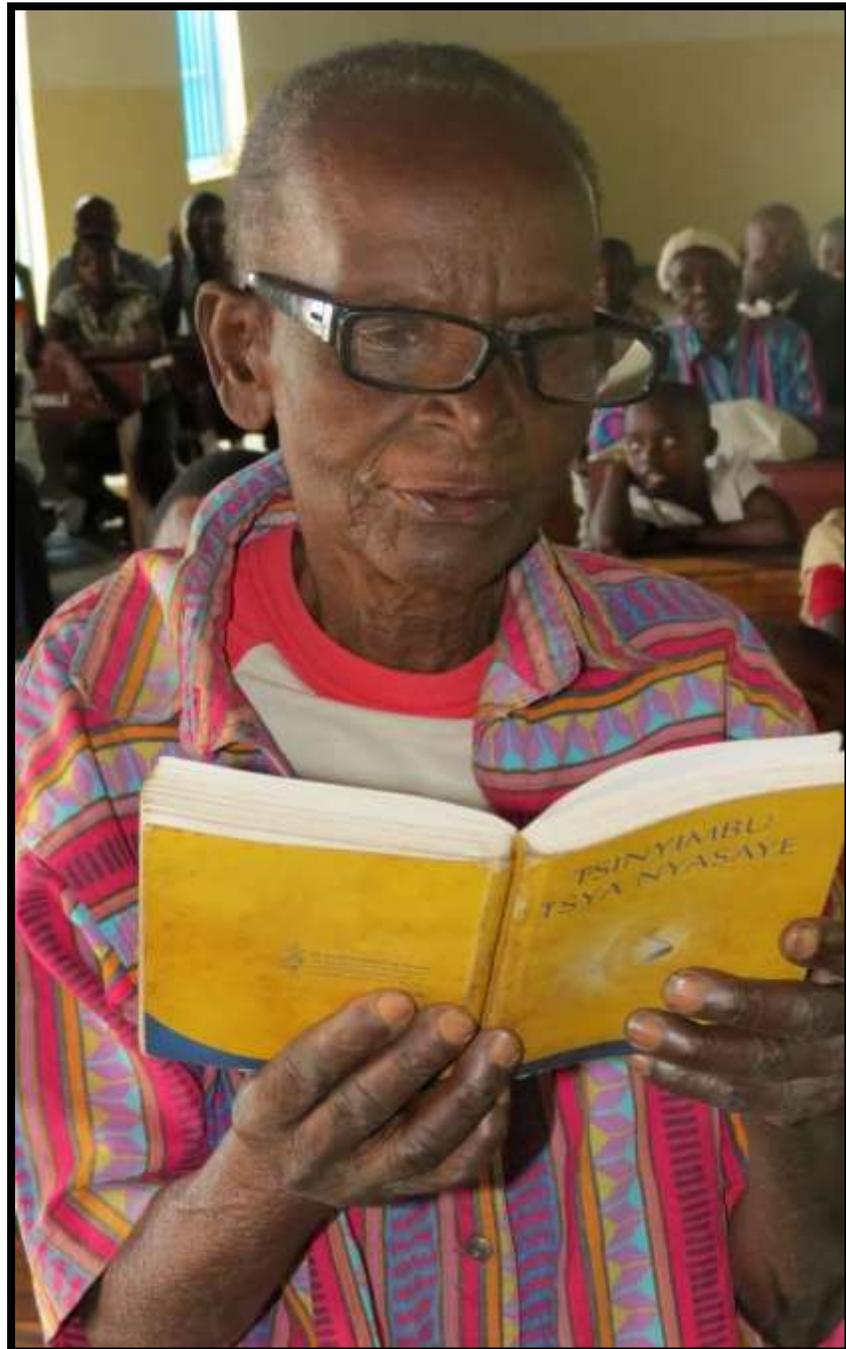
We agreed to hold the annual Youth Conference at Semuto in central Uganda from January 10 – 14, 2018. The theme is drawn from Titus 2:6. The text is to encourage self-control among young people.

We also enjoyed fellowship through well cooked food and games of football and netball with teams from a local media network.

We enjoyed creative music by different choirs, Sunday Schools, teenage, adult, and elderly from various churches and groups in East Africa.

We come away from our Yearly Meeting refreshed and convinced of the truth that an unwavering faith can withstand the test of time.

We have learnt a new and practical aspect of faith through listening to the moving testimony of the oldest Quaker in the Uganda Yearly Meeting (UYM), 97-year old **Kerenuka Kakai (right).**



The barefoot nonagenarian (person 90 to 99 years) generated a mixture of emotions in us. We were moved to tears when she said she has to walk for 5km from her home at Lwakhakha to the Sibuse Friends Church for prayer daily.



She triggered cheers when she recalled that she was part of a team of Quakers returning from an event in the Kampala Friends Church who survived death in 1972.

Below is part of her historic testimony of faith in action:

“Ese Kerenuka Kakai. OmuQuaker omwene walwana ne Amin (In local Lumasaba dialect: I am Kerenuka Kakai. The real Quaker who fought with Amin). We were stopped by Idi Amin’s heavily armed soldiers on the bridge across River Nile (Jinja). They harshly demanded to know which religious group we belonged to? I confidently answered that we are Quakers. I continued singing and praising loudly. Some of the soldiers realized that we belong to one of the churches that their boss (Amin) had banned. So the soldiers demanded that we get out of the vehicle. We did that. I continued worshipping my God. They then ordered us to march towards the side of the bridge and start climbing the steel bars. They then set their guns ready to start shooting us so that our dead bodies would drop into the River Nile. I continued singing and praying. One of them shouted at his colleagues: ‘Shoot

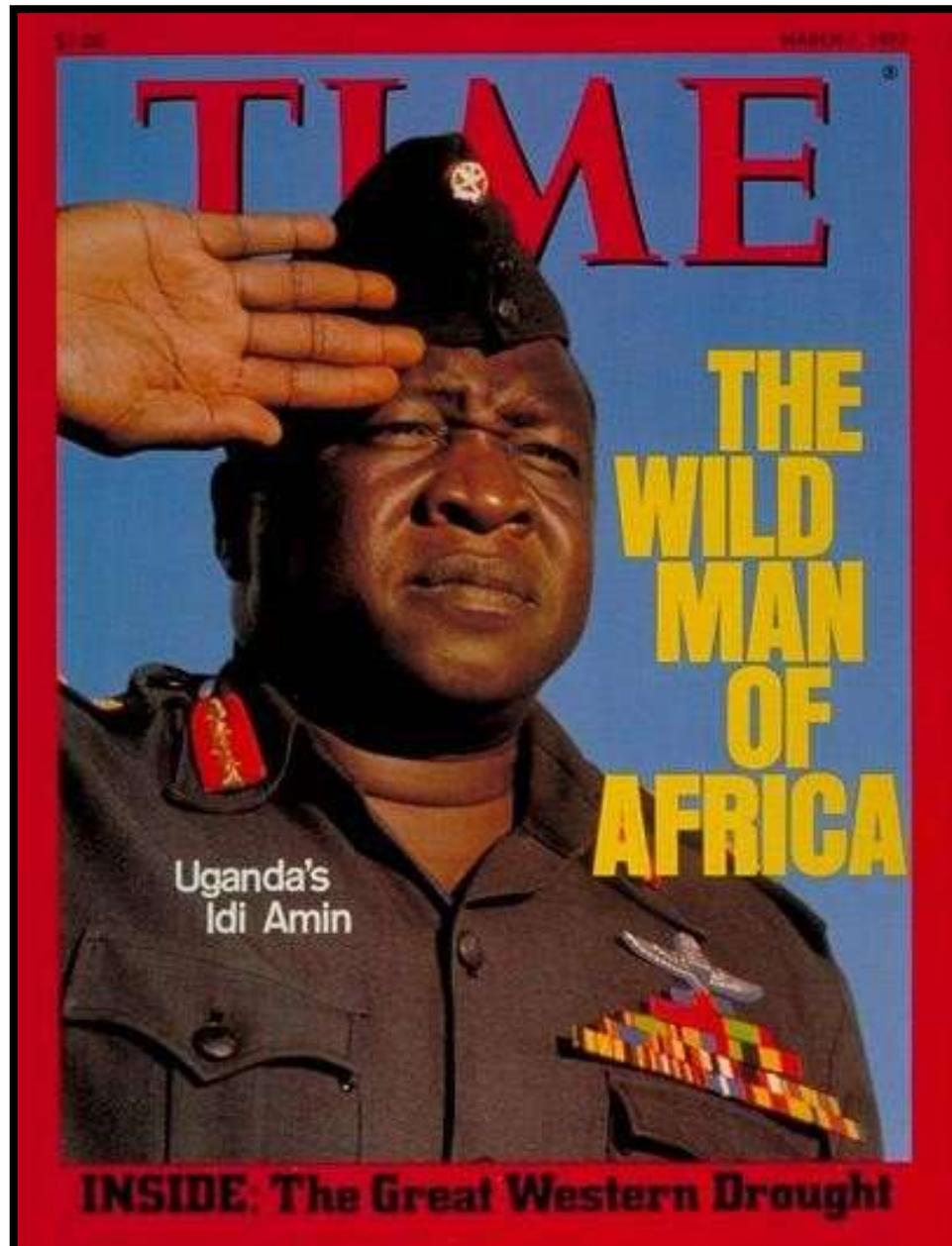
them. Shoot the one who is singing first’. I just raised my arms to the sky and thanked God for our lives. I asked God to forgive the soldiers for they did not know what they were doing. I did it the way Jesus did it. I shut my eyes. Then I heard one of them shout in Kiswahili: ‘Leave those fools. Let them go’. We returned here (Sibuse Friends Church) to praise and thank God for the grace, triumph and power of faith over evil. We defeated Amin!”

On January 26, 1971, Idi Amin started his rule of terror that turned the “Pearl of Africa” (Uganda) into a killing field and a blood bath. The Friends Church in Uganda was banned by "His Excellency President for Life, Field Marshal Alhaji Dr. Idi Amin Dada, VC, DSO, MC, and CBE" Idi Amin in 1973, to the end of his leadership in 1979.

Quakers retreated into silent meetings in nine houses in Sibuse & Buwamingwa. But they attended the EAYM Annual Conferences. It is reported that at least 300,000 opponents were killed from 1971 to 1979. Many victims were fed to the crocodiles in the River Nile.

When he was disposed in 1979 some freedom of worship was restored and the remaining 200 Friends gathered to rebuild broken dreams and churches.

After this the Uganda Yearly Meeting (UYM) was formed, separate from EAYM. After 1986, the freedom of worship was more pronounced.





We reflect on a moving weekend full of inspiration and encouragement. Our program offered space to share, this greatly contributed to making new Friends & renewing Friendships. We wish Friends everywhere in the world Light, Love & Just Peace.

(Alfred Wasike UYM Gen Sec)