**COG member visits CG7 descendants on Kenya trip**

**By Don Esposito**

<http://www.thejournal.org/issues/issue73/esposito.html>

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CARTERET, N.J.--Before talking about our recent trip to Kenya, and by way of introduction:

I was born in New Jersey. I was raised Catholic until I joined the Worldwide Church of God under Herbert Armstrong in 1982.

I stayed in the WCG until 1994, when the church leaders changed most of the central doctrines such as observance of the Ten Commandments including the seventh-day Sabbath and the biblical holy days of Leviticus 23.

I joined the United Church of God in 1995 and was ordained an elder while I was a member of United.

I have since left the United Church of God and have an independent ministry in more than 30 countries.

I met my wife, Petra, in Jerusalem inside of the Garden Tomb (the place of the resurrection) in 1997.

Both of us have been on the road as missionaries since 1999.

We encourage believing pilgrims to come to Jerusalem to represent their given country of origin as a prelude to the millennial reign of Yahshua.

**Faraway places**

Besides Israel, our travels take us to places that include Kenya, Nigeria, the Philippines, Jamaica and China.

Our Congregation of YHWH in Jerusalem is a nondenominational organization to expose people of all backgrounds to the roots of the church.

We also lead pilgrimages and study tours to Israel and Sinai in collaboration with Micha Ashkenazi of Jerusalem. Mr. Ashkenazi has been a leader in archaeological work in Israel for more than 43 years. He holds a Ph.D. in history and archaeology and was the finder of the Pontius Pilate stone in 1974.

**Church of God history in Kenya**

I mention this information as a prelude to reporting our recent trip to Kenya. We just returned from that African country and enjoyed much success there.

Several thousand Church of God members live there, as a result of a congregation of the Church of God Seventh Day started by Elder A.N. Dugger in 1971.

Mr. Dugger, who died in 1975, ordained Mr. Armstrong in 1931. Since then Mr. Dugger's son-in-law, Gordon Fauth, has taken over the work that Elder Dugger was doing in Jerusalem.

Since the initial contact of Andrew Dugger with Kenya in 1971, only once did Mr. Dugger make a subsequent contact. He sent a minister there named Shoemaker for a baptism tour in 1980.

At that time Mr. Shoemaker also ordained 16 elders and pastors. The congregations there have stayed steadfast to the original doctrines of the Church of God throughout the ages.

Most members have and hold dearly a copy of Elder Dugger's History of the True Church.

The only major split in Kenya that has occurred has been over the use of the sacred name, Yahweh. All the congregations there since 1971 have used the Hebrew name Yahshua, as preferred over the Greek Ie-sous, or Jesus.

In about 1997, however, most also started to use the name Yahweh instead of God or Lord, causing a division with the brethren, who, although they believed this to be the true name of the Creator, felt it too sacred a name to pronounce.

About two thirds of the brethren, those who believed in pronouncing the name, stayed with the main group. This constitutes 2,000 or more people all across Kenya.

Some 500 to 800 split off and meet separately.

We visit both congregations.

**Poor but cheerful**

Our trip to Kenya was eye-opening in many ways. The brethren down there are extremely poor, but they have such high spirits it is amazing. Most do not have even the simple conveniences such as electricity, running water or indoor plumbing, but none of them complained in the least.

The trip also brought home to us that material blessings are not always an accurate indication of one's spiritual condition.

In the chaotic, fast-paced world we live in, simplicity of life is more of a blessing than most realize. Our trip was such a testimony to us.

We drove to a different congregation almost daily using small public-transportation minivans called mutatos. They are supposed to hold 10 passengers, but 22 to 25 people usually cram into them.

I had many speaking engagements and wanted to see as many of the brethren as possible.

**Six-hour wait**

On one trip our car broke down and we were almost six hours late. The man waiting for us near a bus stop to take us to the church was not angry in the least. It amazed us that after waiting there for six hours he was still joyful and just so happy to see us. I have never in my life seen such patience.

It was the same with the congregation when we got there. The members had waited all day and were singing and praising when we finally arrived. One young girl had waited six months just to thank us for a dress she had received in an earlier aid package.

These people's humility won't be forgotten. The women especially are extremely hard workers. At the house of the main pastor, Edward, the women have to travel uphill about a third of a mile about four times daily to bring 60-pound water jugs wrapped around their heads.

They are happy to be wives and mothers and never complain.

We were also blessed to witness the baptism of 15 new members while there.

The church buildings are simple wood structures with dirt floors and wood benches. They look like old cow barns with holes in the roofs and cracks in the walls.

We were blessed to be able to donate money to them to fix the roof of the sleeping building so the brethren will not have to get soaking wet at feast times. They also keep the Feast of Tabernacles at these places. They sleep on dirt floors with straw and lie side by side, without even room to turn.

Most places do not have running water and have outhouses rather than toilets.

The kitchens are simple, with open fires.

The members do not cook on the Sabbath.

They separate the men from the women during services, as happened in the first-century congregations.

Women are not teachers, according to Scripture, and it would also be offensive to them if a woman wore pants.

Petra and I felt it was the most biblical service we have ever attended. The pastors truly try to protect their flocks from Western perversions.

**Main problem: unemployment**

We are determined to continue to work with the brethren in Kenya to help them with their main problems of unemployment of about 80 percent and the education of their children, which is extremely poor.

We are trying to start a project, Yahweh willing, to help them obtain a school property they can work from to create jobs and income and also educate not only their children in the ways of Yahweh but other Kenyan children.

The school, if purchased, could also be privatized, so not only would they be able to properly educate their children in the ways of Yahweh but they could produce income to assist the starving African brethren.

This would also put the church in Kenya on a safe ground with the government. Although freedom of religion is the official policy of Kenya, Sabbath-keepers are frowned upon and not legitimized. A school as a headquarters could protect them from persecution but, most important, teach their children how to read so they can read the Bible.

We are setting a goal of $10,000 to $15,000 to purchase property and build a school building, which could also be used to house brethren fleeing from Sudan, Ethiopia and Uganda.

**Selling herbs**

The other project we are helping the Kenyan brethren with is the sale of all-natural herbs.

Kenya has some of the world's best herbs, and some of the brethren there are herbal doctors. They grow all the herbs themselves with no pesticides or fertilizers.

Kenya is one of the most fertile countries I have ever seen. These herbs can treat the cause of an illness, not just the effect.

The brethren have natural herbs to cure asthma, heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and most other ailments.

We are not benefiting one penny by promoting these herbs for the Kenyan brethren. The herbs can be ordered directly from them, and the brethren will send them directly to those who order them.

We are, however, trying to connect them to other brethren because we truly believe in herbs for healing and want to help the Kenyan brethren.

We also will be sending the Kenyan brethren aid to help them evangelize in other areas. They have started congregations in Ethiopia, Uganda and Sudan.

We met one of the ordained elders from Sudan, who shared with us the dire need of the brethren there. The Sudanese are dying of diarrhea, starvation and many other maladies.

**Brethren as refugees**

As poor as the Kenyan brethren are, each Kenyan congregation took up an offering for the Ethiopian brethren. Our ministry also gave a sizable offering for the brethren there.

Between civil war and drought, the situation in both Ethiopia and Sudan is desperate. Many have fled these countries and are living in refugee camps under United Nations control.

You can read in our newsletter of some of the horrific stories happening in Uganda and Sudan. Muslims are killing our brethren almost daily.

Sharia (strict Muslim law) is in effect in Sudan. According to Sharia law, anyone not converting to Islam is an infidel and should be killed.

**Project Africa**

We are calling our project in Kenya "Project Africa." Our goal is to make the Kenya operation self-sustaining in 12 months.

These people are hard workers; they don't want handouts. All they need is a little jump start from the brethren around the world who have been blessed to be able to help them.

If we could accomplish the school-building project and the herbal project in the next 12 months, then, from the income of these projects, the Kenyan brethren would fund all the other needy brethren from the other African countries.

We truly have the opportunity not just to help one needy brother but to literally change the lives of thousands of African brethren.

If anyone would like to contribute to this project over the next 12 months, please specify the Kenya project on your offering. Petra and I are committed to help in any way possible. The love and dedication of the brethren in Kenya truly touched us in a way words cannot express.

We thank you all for your prayers and support of the African brethren.

**A.N. Dugger congregation is back after almost 20 years**

**By Don Esposito**

<http://www.thejournal.org/issues/issue101/andugger.html>

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JERUSALEM--It was 1931 and the Church of God 7th Day's council of elders unanimously voted to send Andrew Dugger, who then lived in Stanberry, Mo., and was editor of *The Bible Advocate* and also for many previous years president of the general council, to Jerusalem.

They sent him there to set up a headquarters congregation for the CG7 for the purpose of the preaching of the end-time work from the Holy City according to Micah 4:1.

Elder Dugger stayed in Jerusalem for about a year and then went back to the United States to report on his groundwork for setting up the church headquarters in Jerusalem. But upon his return he found the CG7 in much division.

When I started to research the background of the Church of God starting from about 1840 and the breakoff of the Seventh-day Adventists from the Church of God over the prophecies of Ellen G.

White, I was surprised to learn that this modern era of the Church of God, starting in the 1840s, was always filled with division and men trying to control other men's money and beliefs.

This in itself should be a lesson to all of us who have been Church of God members down through the years.

**Bordering on blasphemy**

The Church of God, as it has been called, is not a worldly secular corporation as many who were privileged by our Heavenly Father to be in positions of influence believed. That there have been so many divisions and splits over the last 150 years should show us that hierarchical government and running our Savior's precious Body as a corporate entity is not only doomed to failure, as church history has shown, but borders on blasphemy.

This is what has divided the Church of God for more than 150 years.

It was not doctrine in most cases (although the 1933 breakup was partly over doctrinal issues such as some ministers wanting to allow the eating of unclean meats), because I believe most in Yahweh's congregation have the same basic beliefs that were set out by Elder Dugger and the church council back in 1933 when the Stanberry, Mo., Church of God split from the Salem, W.Va., Church of God.

The basic doctrines were belief in the Ten Commandments and the Sabbath day, belief in abstaining from pork and other unclean food, a literal return to earth of our Savior Yahshua and a 1,000-year millennial reign, water baptism and the laying on of hands, the celebrating of the yearly Passover service on the 14th of Aviv, etc.

**Church government again**

The split in 1933 was not mainly over the central doctrines as just named but mostly over church government.

The church stayed divided until 1948, when a set of conferences tried to reunite it.

Interestingly enough, 1934 was also around the time that Herbert Armstrong broke off from the Church of God 7th Day to establish the Radio Church of God, which would eventually become the Worldwide Church of God.

Most of the Church of God 7th Day did not consider Mr. Armstrong's Worldwide Church of God as a legitimate branch of the Church of God 7th Day because he broke off solely on his own without the authority of the mother corporation.

For his part, Mr. Armstrong always stated that his ministry was set up directly from God.

The fact that the whole WCG organization fell apart at the death of one man in 1986 should show that it was governmental structure and not doctrine that destroyed the Worldwide Church of God.

There are well over 1,000 breakoff groups of the WCG, most forming after the death of Mr. Armstrong.

Therefore this cannot be the governmental structure laid down by our Savior.

**Destructive doctrine**

I believe that the "only true church" doctrine as taught by Mr. Armstrong has been by far the most destructive of all the doctrines preached by Church of God groups in our time.

Similarly, did any of these leaders ever stop to think what damage emotionally and spiritually they were inflicting on our Heavenly Father's remnant flock by disfellowshipping them at the drop of a dime and then telling them that unless they repented and came under the total submission of the church leadership they would go to the lake of fire?

I am not against congregational structure as taught in Scripture. Each congregation should have overseers and elders, and everything should be done decently and in order.

But nowhere does Scripture say that a central headquarters should send its own men to take over local congregations and indoctrinate the brethren with their own hierarchy system and collect their tithes.

A central headquarters should be used solely for preaching the gospel and providing for feasts and conferences to help unite the brethren.

**The reason for ordained elders**

Also, the main purpose of an ordained elder is to serve the brethren, not control them. Biblical servant leadership through ordination has been replaced in many Church of God organizations with puppet governments of influential men who jockey to the top and place their friends and children in top leadership positions.

The Stanberry and Salem branches of the Church of God 7th Day did come together again 16 years later as one entity, but they went right back to a worldly church-government corporate-structure arrangement.

Only briefly in 1933, when the Stanberry and Salem congregations split, did Elder Andrew Dugger, under inspiration from the Holy Spirit, set up a biblical congregational structure of the naming of 12 apostles, seven over finances of the work and 70 elders to go out two by two for the preaching of the good-news message.

Names were selected by lot, as was done when the apostle Judas had to be replaced in Acts 2.

All those who were part of the selection process were qualified ordained ministers, but this way the picking of the leadership would be left to our Heavenly Father and not to the oppression of men.

However, this lasted only for a short time, until 1948, when the churches merged again and brought back the unscriptural corporate-style government.

**Ahead of the lot**

One interesting situation that brought about the discarding of picking leaders by lot was that in 1948, when Stanberry and Salem were uniting and originally picking leaders by lot every time a name was drawn from a hat, it was invariably a minister from the Salem group, and not one Stanberry minister was drawn.

This caused the Stanberry ministers to discard the selecting of leaders by lot when it should have been a clear sign to the Salem leaders that it was not Yahweh's will for them to unite with the more-liberal Stanberry elders.

At this point also, the church reneged on the previously ordained, unanimous decision to establish the world headquarters of the church in Jerusalem, Israel.

Elder Dugger knew this was a mistake and continued following the God-given mandate to set Jerusalem up as the church headquarters for preaching the end-time message.

In 1950 the Dugger family went on a missionary trip to Nigeria that bears fruit even to this day.

But when the family returned to America to its residence in Oregon, several of the Duggers had typhoid fever.

Let us listen to Naomi Dugger Fauth, the 75-year-old daughter of Andrew Dugger, tell the story that changed their lives.

**Naomi Dugger's memories**

"All of us recovered from the typhoid fever except my mother Effie [Andrew Dugger's wife]," began Mrs. Fauth. "She had the fever extremely bad and went into a coma."

The Duggers were living in the Willamette Valley in Oregon at the time.

"We took her to the hospital, and they did not give her any chance of survival. After being in a coma for more than a week, the nurse asked my father for a phone number where he could be reached that night because they did not expect my mother to survive through the night.

"This was a Friday afternoon. She was bleeding so bad that they were giving her blood infusions more than her body could take because it was coming out so quick.

"They told my father that, even if by some miracle she did not die, she would be a vegetable and would never regain consciousness again.

"My father had been praying and was told by God that my mother would be healed, so he told the nurse there was no need to give a phone number, that my mother was going to be healed.

"Well, we left and saw such a beautiful sunset, and for the first time since my mother was sick I knew she would be okay.

"My father had prayed that afternoon that if Yahweh would heal my mother he would keep his promise to Yahweh to go to Jerusalem and start the end-time work there.

"The next day we went to church and then went to the hospital. When we arrived, the nurse called my father frantically, saying, 'Come quickly.'

"When we came around the corner we entered my mother's room and she had come out of the coma and was awake and completely healed without even any side effects.

"The doctors were amazed and told my father that no one had ever recovered from typhoid that was that progressed. The doctors were so amazed at the miracle that they put my mother in the health medical books as an unexplained healing.

"When my father went over to my mother, she told him that the first thing that happened to her when she awoke was that she heard a voice from the Holy Spirit clearly speak to her and say, 'Tell your husband to remember his promise.' Needless to say, my parents moved to Israel a few months later."

**Reporting from Mount Zion**

As described in the above paragraphs by Naomi Dugger Fauth, Elder Dugger's decision to move his family started the end-time work in Jerusalem of Andrew Dugger, one of the great founding church fathers of our modern era.

Elder Dugger opened up a printing press in a Jerusalem suburb known as Boca and opened up a church building and congregation in another suburb closer to the Old City of Jerusalem.

He faithfully kept his word to Yahweh to preach the end-time Church of God message from Israel.

He started a magazine called *The Mount Zion Reporter*and also did missionary work to help people in several countries including Kenya, Nigeria, India and Jamaica, where thousands of Church of God members and congregations live to this day.

In 1975 Elder Dugger passed away and now awaits the resurrection of the just.

**Original 1931 commission**

His son-in-law, Gordon Fauth, and his daughter, Naomi Fauth, took over the reins of the church when Elder Dugger passed away and continued to work faithfully toward the original commission of the Church of God elders in 1931: to have and operate an end-time work out of Jerusalem.

Because of the various Arab-Israeli conflicts and health difficulties, the Dugger church ceased operation in the mid-1980s.

In early 2002, while on a missionary trip to Kenya, I had learned about Naomi and Gordon Fauth, who were still living in Jerusalem, from the very churches in Kenya that Elder Dugger's work had produced.

I had been working with these Dugger churches, bringing aid to the suffering African brethren, and also had recently finished a project to build a new stone church building for them to meet in, the first of its kind in Kenya (see "[Church of God Member Visits CG7 Descendants on Kenyan Trip](http://www.thejournal.org/issues/issue73/esposito.html), *The Journal,* Feb. 28, 2003).

When we returned to Jerusalem in 2002, we met with Naomi (Gordon is ill and confined to a chair) and have built a wonderful relationship over the last three years.

Naomi is a discerning sister and has a wealth of stories from Church of God history and has wisdom beyond her years.

She has learned, as her father learned also once he moved to Israel, that the Church of God (now called in Jerusalem the Congregation of Yahweh) is not a corporate structure controlled by men but a spiritual organism of which any true baptized member is a part.

The Duggers learned that uniformity of our basic beliefs and faith in our Heavenly Father's Word are what make us a member of the one and only true congregation of Yahweh, not being on a church roll of one segregated Church of God group.

The fact of the matter is that the Church of God throughout the first 1,800 years of its existence was never made up solely of one corporate structure. It was always scattered and small and without telephones and computers and had little contact with other brethren around the world.

Each congregation was autonomous. It was the central beliefs outlined in this article that made them one through the Holy Spirit.

I have witnessed this myself in our international ministry around the world in the last 10 years. I have met thousands of brethren, all believing as I do, without a central corporate headquarters insisting they observe a central set of doctrines made by men.

**Three pilgrim Feasts**

Yahweh opened a door for us to sponsor three pilgrim Feasts in Jerusalem since 2001, and it is quite an honor to do so.

Our heavenly Father has also opened several doors for us in archeology, and we are preparing to open up this fall a biblical-archeological school in which the antiquity department of the nation of Israel will work with us supplying the lecturers.

We will also sponsor our students upon graduation to participate in antiquity-department digs.

Another key role of this new Bible school will be to teach the students true servant leadership and not hierarchical control of men.

**Jerusalem residents**

My wife, Petra, and I moved permanently to Israel in March 2005.

Last year Naomi Dugger Fauth was inspired to reopen the Dugger church after all these years and asked me if I would be the overseer of that congregation.

I was more than honored. Coming from a Worldwide Church of God background, I was never schooled in the importance of having an end-time work in the nation of Israel, but I have been taught this through the Holy Spirit, as I believe Elder Dugger was.

Interestingly enough, my ordination to the ministry was by a Church of God elder who traced his roots all the way back to the Radio Church of God and was ordained by Elder Bartholomew, who was also a Church of God 7th Day elder and not a WCG elder. So, although my roots are primarily through the WCG, my ministerial credentials go back to Church of God 7th Day.

We had our first service in the Dugger church after almost 20 years on Yom Kippur 2004, and we celebrated Passover with Sister Naomi and our little congregation in April 2005.

It was most nostalgic. We even had an elder from Kenya there with us on Yom Kippur.

Sister Naomi shared many stories of faith and miracles that happened to her and her family while living in Israel.

**Fisher of men**

One story she told was that each night before her father went on an evangelical campaign he would dream that he was fishing. The number of fish he would catch in the dream was the very number of new brethren he would baptize on that trip.

I know many have not learned from the mistakes of hierarchical government and corporate church structure. Many so-called Church of God groups still claim they are the only true church even though there are thousands of groups who keep the commandments of Yahweh and have the testimony of Yahshua, as Revelation 14:12 states.

We believe the congregation of our Heavenly Father is a spiritual organism and not an organization.

Romans 8:16 states: "The spirit testifies against itself that we are the Sons of Yahweh."

We accept all our brethren who keep the commandments of our Heavenly Father and have the faith of our Savior and welcome them in the great work that our Heavenly Father has set before all of us, not just a selected few.

We also welcome like-minded believers to come and share the Feast experience with us in Jerusalem if blessed to do so.

**Fruit for the Kingdom**

I would like to end this article with a direct quote from Andrew Dugger that he wrote in 1972, three years before his death, in his updated book *A True History of the True Religion:*

"There are a number of other groups of this same faith with some slight non-essential doctrinal differences in various places carrying on a good work and printing various publications. We believe they are all gathering fruit for the Kingdom, and the foundation creed of all these groups is the same (Rev 12:17), and some that make the sacred Hebrew names a special part of their message (Pr 30:4, Ps 68:4, 91:14 69:35-36, Is 52:6).

"We believe these will all fall in line with the Holy Scriptures and publicly affirm that Jerusalem was chosen of the Father, and must be recognized as the world headquarters by all of the remnant people holding to the New Testament name, and the true faith once delivered to the Saints, as they are led further by the Holy Spirit."

**Greetings to the brethren**

I also believe that unity in the Body will come only when carnal-minded men come to repentance over having controlling spirits and stop trying to coerce the sheep that our Savior Yahshua bought with His precious blood.

I pray for that day to come quickly, and in the meantime my greetings to all my brothers and sisters in the true Congregation of Yahweh from your fellow brethren in Jerusalem. B'Shem Yahshua.