**IS THE LITTLE FLOCK ALWAYS SCATTERED AND AT CROSSROAD?**

Lately I have witnessed how heated discussions of diverse topics have dominated a few groups that have messianic of different backgrounds. It reminds me of something that has been happening to me. Some few years ago I moved to a new town and I have met messianic though not affiliated to the group that I would say I belong, but we have many things in common. One thing I have noted with precision is that we all use the very same Bible lessons from Jerusalem Israel, we sing the same songs, and we all use the name Yahshua and keep the Sabbath day the same way. Beside the Sabbath and it being a sign for Messianics, other similarities include the belief in seven church eras, the identification of the Roman Catholic Church with the Mystery Babylonian religion, the historic Beast power has been the Roman Empire and its successor Holy Roman Empire, water baptism, concept of the end-time remnant church, places of protection for God’s people during the Great Tribulation and so forth.

Last year, next to the worship room which is a private school leased out to our brethrens, was always another Sabbath keeping group- The Seventh day Adventist Reform Movement (a splinter group of the mainstream Seventh Day Adventist). One day during lunch break, an elder from the Reform Movement came to where we were sitting and we had a lengthy discussion of issues, what came out is the urge to iron out our differences and possibly worship together, he (the reform movement elder) could not see how two people who have seen light cannot walk together, it reminded me of my entire life, I have seen churches (both Sunday keeping and Sabbath keeping) sprang up.

Ever since the scattering of God’s Sabbatarian church (Acts 8:1), it has not been one composite organization, but has consisted of many groups related to one another. Some of those groups have died out; some seem spiritually without life; but some are alive and well, doing a good work to bring many to salvation. Over the centuries the Church has been persecuted by powerful political and religious enemies – in many ways it became lost to view because it was so small and unrecognized or fell under the umbrella term for a number of heretical groups. You don’t read much of *this* true Body of Messiah in the secular histories of this world! No, the world little notes or no long remembers, the activities of this “little flock,” hated and despised by the world, driven to the wilderness by persecution, always opposed, usually scattered! But there are enough references to it in authentic histories to show that it has continued through every century to now! (Read the History of True Religion)

**IN HISTORY**

In the autumn of 1860, Sabbath-keeping Adventists hold a conference in Battle Creek, Michigan to discuss legal organization. James and Ellen White help persuade those at the conference to adopt the name *Seventh-Day Adventist* for the new group. Disagreements about the new church name, the rejection of the belief that Ellen G. White's visions were divinely inspired, and other issues would eventually lead to a church split. With the formation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the 1860s, some individuals and fellowships withdrew in 1863 or later in 1866 from the Church of God while still the Seventh-day Baptists remained a separate, but related entity. In 1922, the name was officially known as Church of God (Seventh Day) and has remained such to this day.

In the summer of 1881 Brother W.C. Long wrote a letter to the *Advocate*, in which he Advocated the practice of tithing, which seems to have been a new teaching in the Church of God at about that time.

Membership and new elders to the Church of God were sometimes added from the Seventh-day Adventist Church. One such elder was Greenberry G Rupert, a friend of Ellen G White, whose writings apparently proved impressionable on Herbert W Armstrong, founder of the Worldwide Church of God (initially known as the Radio Church of God). Rupert brought with him the belief that the annual sabbaths, in addition to the weekly sabbath, are important for Messianics to understand and to observe – this understanding impacted upon sections of the Church of God, a few members were already observing these days.

During his time with the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the late nineteenth century, Rupert performed missionary work in parts of South America. Later, in the 1960s, Worldwide Church of God ministers stumbled across many of these scattered remnants of Rupert’s missionary work. They never associated with any other sabbatarian group, but continued to faithfully observe the sabbath and in many cases, the annual sabbaths. To this day, many Adventists privately observe these days. Rupert died in 1922, still a Church of God elder,

Elder Burdette Coon of the Seventh Day Baptists had delivered a series of sermons at Stanberry each evening for a week around December of 1922. In July of 1923, C.A. Hansen of Chicago, a Seventh Day Baptist pastor, wrote the Advocate noting that he had heard rumors of union between the groups. For twenty years a Seventh-Day Adventist, he was now with the Seventh Day Baptists. Hansen liked the idea of union, for it would "almost double" the membership, and he could overlook "little differences”

 At the 1923 conference on August 20, there were in attendance several delegates from the Seventh Day Baptist church, including Corliss Fitz Randolph. Both groups had appointed committees for the purpose of working out plans or ways whereby the Church of God and the Seventh Day Baptists could co-operate and possibly even unite. The Church of God committee consisted of: A.N. Dugger, D.P. Moore, L.L. Presler, Carl Carver, G.T. Rodgers. The Seventh Day Baptist committee was composed of: W.D. Burdick, R.B. St. Clair, W.L. Burdick, C.F. Randolph (Seventh Day Baptist historian), E.F. Randolph (Conference President)

Dugger was elected Chairman of the combined committee, with W.D. Burdick Vice-Chairman. Delegates to the other group's conference were to be appointed by each body at the annual meeting. In localities where Seventh Day Baptists and Church of God congregations were in proximity, the ministers and members were encouraged to meet one another. Literature was exchanged, and pastors of each church were to speak at least once a year on unity. Elder Lionel I. Rodgers, delegate from the Church of God, attended the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference at North Loup, Nebraska shortly after the Stanberry meeting

 The 1923 union plan was not the first interaction between the two groups. In 1907, Seventh Day Baptist Elder H.D. Clark spoke at a Stanberry Sabbath meeting, and a later Advocate of that year noted that the new editor of the Seventh Day Baptist Sabbath Recorder, a Theodore L. Gardiner, was an able man.

Eastern churches appeared to be more inclined to a union effort, for it was reported in 1923 that "union meetings" were held at Beacon, New York, sponsored by W.T. Jones. Church of God people, independent Sabbath-keepers, pentecostals, and Seventh Day Baptists were in attendance.

Nothing further came of the unity idea, as it appears that doctrinal differences were actually too great. The unity committees were disbanded in 1926, The church split again in 1933 with re-amalgamation in 1950, although some did not rejoin the General Conference.

In 1931 Herbert W Armstrong was ordained a minister of the Church of God (Seventh Day) and in 1933 he formed a congregation known as the Radio Church of God (renamed to Worldwide Church of God in 1968). After several years his credentials as a minister of the Church of God (Seventh Day) was withdrawn in 1938 although he still co-operated with them until 1945 and Radio Church of God members visited with the mother church until the early 1950s. After that time, virtually all communication between the two groups ceased.

When Dugger returned from Jerusalem, he found the church in turmoil. The newer liberals who had come in from protestant denominations wanted to have articles published and were prevented from doing so. Dugger was concerned about liberal elements watering down doctrine such as: permitting the eating of unclean meats; smoking; that seven last plagues listed in Rev. 16 were neither future nor literal; date for Passover observance.

**IN KENYA**

According to the *Kenya Churches Handbook*, the church was first established in Gitundaga village, Thompson Falls and chartered as the *Jerusalem 7th Day Church of God*. The main challenge was that in about 12 years they had learnt the doctrine through tracts and magazines from Jerusalem Israel but had not received the baptism of immersion and so could not have been fully operational. In the course of 12 years few believed but when A.M Shoemaker finally arrived, many become baptised. Their backgrounds was a major hindrance to harmonious fellowshipping, there were those that came from mainstream churches like AIC, PCEA, SDA and even Catholic, others came from traditional African churches like the Akorino and many carried traces of their former beliefs into the new dispensation.

On December 5, 1970, a meeting to discuss way forward as well as ways and means of evangelizing was organized at Gitundaga. Church program and order of service was the first bone of contention, a code of conduct, duties of elders was drawn; composition of church members and their conducts and also mode of elections in the church were established. Immediately the Chairman finished reading the proposals, 3 of the sixteen openly disagreed. Tithing was the other biggest obstacle to progression an issue that the 3 also disputed openly, they dismissed the proposals and walked out. Other issues included, speaking in tongues, taking medicine, dress code, dreams and visions

So they wrote a letter to Jerusalem and were advised of the church program, then the issue of tithing on Sabbath and therefore on 24th January 1971 a church treasury committee was formed to oversee management of tithes and offering, it was later reviewed and agreed upon on 13th July 1975.

Calls for evangelization from various places in the country started coming in. Though the issue above seemed to have been resolved, the three continued to rebel from inside and on one occasion, one of the sixteen was dispatched to the eastern region to evangelize but did not go despite being given all the support.

Many faithful gathered again from 4th -13th October 1971 at Githiga, Muranga district where many doctrinal issues were discussed. To me this was the perfect chance to harmonize and iron out differences emanating from traces which were brought from their former religious affiliations. Unfortunately this did not happen and the aftermath is what we do identify with today all over Kenya. Two factions one led by Edward Macharia and the other by Harun Muigai Nganga. The two men seemed and were perceived authorities of the teachings. Many looked upon them and whatever they said many took as the absolute truth.

On 29th March 1972, the first feast of Passover was observed in the following places Molo, Embu, Naivasha, Nyahururu, Githiga and Olkalau. The chairman of the new church was much concerned by the rift widening between his two pastors (Edward, and Muigai) and so on 4th November 1972, he summoned Edward and the two went to Olkalao to meet Muigai, but did not reach a consensus maybe because each held to his understanding of biblical beliefs. The result was that the 16 were divided into two, those that aligned to Edward and those that aligned to Muigai to a point that one could not go to the other perceived regions. It was even worse when in December 1974, one pastor instructed one of his aligned elder not to accept anyone else to perform a baptism except him.

On 2nd March 1975 a large gathering was convened at Limuru and later another meeting was held on 26th April in Naivasha all in the efforts of bringing together the Church of God but both of them were in vain. Amazingly none sought new registration with the government, they all continued to preach the news under the same name Jerusalem Seventh day Church of God. They also continued the same material, the Bible lessons from Jerusalem Israel and tracts from Jerusalem and sang the very same songs. The goods news continued to be accepted elsewhere.

A Mr Joel Chebukuto, stumbled on the Judah magazine and later sent a letter to Jerusalem, he was directed to Edward Macharia and therefore on 19th September 1975, a delegation of 10 people, 3 men and 7 women landed in Sigor, Bomet for the feast of tabernacles. On 24th September 1975 two men were ordained as ministers of the Gospel, Joel Taita Chebukuto and Joel Kipngetich Taalam. On 27th September 1975, 10 men were ordained as elders. Further on 20th March 1974, another delegation of 3 men was sent to Embu where one Mr. Harrison Ireri was ordained minister of the gospel and 4 men as elders. On 10th July 1977 a Mr. Zablon K Kerich was ordained as minister of gospel in charge of Kericho, the work had indeed become much in the Kalenjin region, many believed and many were baptised. On one occasion 42 people were baptised in the crocodile infested river Yala. On 13th October 1979, a Mr Michael Kamau Githama was ordained minister of Gospel in charge of Lamu, coast region.

Discontent continued and there were calls for change of registration name, there was also a call to change guard from the old to new generation of educated youngsters. Doctrinal differences continued to multiply to an extent that some seemed to be created for the sole purpose of creating ground for division. The climax was the arrival of William Heuer and his companion a Mr. Bob on 27th November 1981 at around 8:45 am; coincidentally he spent 22 days in Kenya till he left on 21st December 1981. During his stay he visited many places, and he tried to create some order one of which was forming the board of seven and re-ordaining three of the sixteen with oil on 18th December 1981. Of interest to note is that in the selection of the bond of 7 all were to be included that is from the two factions and any other disgruntled party. According to one man who become a member of the committee, if it were not for intervention of Elohim, Heuer would have torn the church much further apart. To me his efforts did not help much and this formed a genesis of departure from the Jerusalem headquarters led body to emerging bodies with headquarters everywhere in the world. From then to date many other groups have sprung up. People stopped being tolerant of others and individualism, greed, selfishness became the order of the day.

So again I ask ‘is the little flock, always scattered and at crossroad? Where are the unity champions? Where are the so-called digital generation? Has technology and access to information changed anything? Is it going to change?

### 1 Corinthians 10

### Warnings From Israel’s History

10 For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. 2 They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. 3 They all ate the same spiritual food 4 and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. 5 Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

6 Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. 7 Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: “The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.”[[a](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2010&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28575a)] 8 We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. 9 We should not test Christ,[[b](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2010&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-28577b" \o "See footnote b)] as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. 10 And do not grumble, as some of them did —and were killed by the destroying angel.

11 These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come. 12 So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall! 13 No temptation[[c](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2010&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28581c)] has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted[[d](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2010&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28581d)] beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted,[[e](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2010&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-28581e" \o "See footnote e)] he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

### Idol Feasts and the Lord’s Supper

14 Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. 15 I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. 16 Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? 17 Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf.

18 Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? 19 Do I mean then that food sacrificed to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? 20 No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord’s table and the table of demons. 22 Are we trying to arouse the Lord’s jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

### The Believer’s Freedom

23 “I have the right to do anything,” you say—but not everything is beneficial. “I have the right to do anything”—but not everything is constructive. 24 No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.

25 Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, 26 for, “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it.”[[f](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2010&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28594f)]

27 If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience. 28 But if someone says to you, “This has been offered in sacrifice,” then do not eat it, both for the sake of the one who told you and for the sake of conscience. 29 I am referring to the other person’s conscience, not yours. For why is my freedom being judged by another’s conscience? 30 If I take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for?

31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. 32 Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God — 33 even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.