

“THE MOST FEAST EVER”

Africa is a continent of extremes. Some, I understand on good authority, go to South Africa for the Feast because they are so well taken care of there that they feel that they are experiencing the Kingdom ahead of time!

But Africa is a place of contrasts. Africa is also the place where a whole congregation can be incarcerated on the way home from the Feast – for doing absolutely nothing wrong.

It’s also a place where the need for the Kingdom of God is manifestly evident. It may surprise you to know that there were seven Feast sites in Africa this year: giving the continent over a third of the Feast sites in the Church.



Just south of Durban we have Scottburgh, where the South Africa brethren met. There was also a beautiful Feast site in Harare (Zimbabwe). They are very keen for people to go there next year. Mr Orchard said that it would be great for visitors to go there, provided they are prepared to do their own laundry and eat local food.

They have a second Feast site in Zimbabwe, which is known “The Mango Tree Site” because the brethren meet underneath a mango tree. I don’t have a photograph of it, but you

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can imagine the size of a mango tree accommodating some 99 – 100 people under its shade. This is not the first year they have met under the mango tree. They have met there for a number of years now.

There was a Feast site in Douala from which the Gabonese brethren were incarcerated, and there was also a Feast site in Porta Nova in the country of Benin. The Nigerian and Ghanaian brethren met at the Feast site in Accra.

We also had a Feast site in Madagascar, and finally, last but not least, we have Kenya. So dotted around the sub-Saharan Africa we have some seven Feast sites.

To many people, Africa is just “away off over there somewhere.” Most of the projections of the maps of the world give a very distorted view of Africa, because Africa, as a continent, represents 20% of the world’s land surface! It is an enormous piece of territory. And 25% of it is one desert – which, if you calculate that out, means that 5% of the earth’s land surface is the Sahara! You will notice that all of our Feast sites are south of the Sahara for reasons you will well understand.

Kenya was a site with a difference this year. Nairobi is the capital city through which most people enter. There are very few ways into Kenya other than through Nairobi or via the coast.

Most of our brethren come from the west of the country. Our Feast sites in the past few years have been in this area.

We normally travel into Nairobi and then on down to the edge of Lake Victoria, to the area west of the Rift Valley. This where our membership over the past few years have come from. It’s also an area in which we have developed a relationship with a group of people who were originally given the truth by Andrew Dugger from Jerusalem. They call themselves the “Church of God Seventh Day, Jerusalem.”

Interestingly, when we were involved in setting up the “Church of God” in Nairobi in the 1970s, we met a group of these people in Nairobi. There was an absolute stark contrast



Mr and Mrs Ephraim Abok

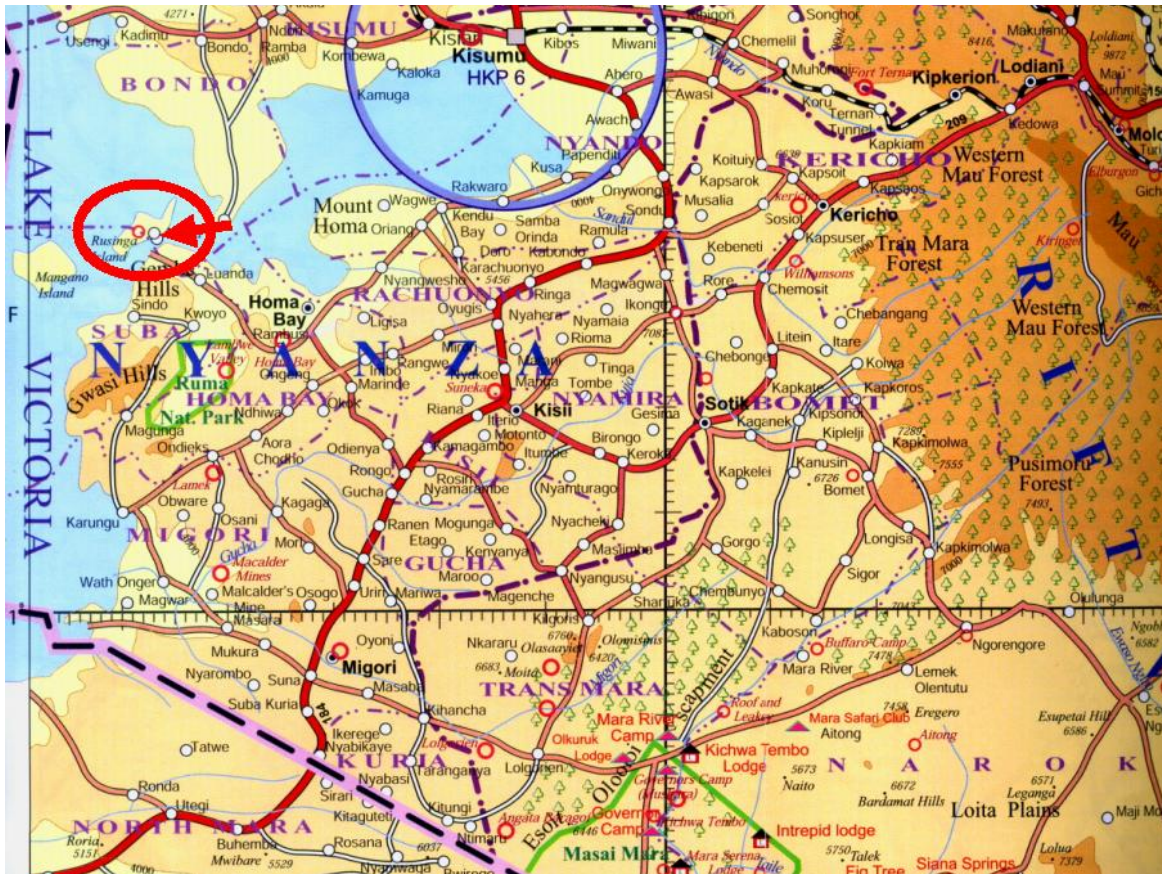
between the group of people down in the southwest and the people in Nairobi. The people in Nairobi seemed to be fascinated by keeping the Sabbath Day. It was almost a “badge of honour.” “We keep the Sabbath Day. We are different to you.” They had no interest in the Holy Days whatsoever.

But in the mid 1990s, John Bartholomew met the original member of this particular group in the southwest, and found that these people kept the Holy Days, and have been keeping the Holy Days for many years, by themselves, without any support from anyone else.

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After Mr Bartholomew met the leader of this group, Ephraim Osama Abok, Mr Hulme was invited to perform the wedding of Ephraim’s son. He declined. It was a little too far to go for a wedding ceremony.

Over the past ten years, Ephraim Abok has maintained very close contact with John Bartholomew and has requested to become part of the Church of God an International Community. It is his desire to bring all the elders and the Church congregations under his supervision with him. So to this end, it was arranged that we should have a combined Feast site in Kenya this year. The site established was on Rusinga Island in Lake Victoria.



The people coming to the Feast came from the southwest of Kenya, bordering on Lake Victoria.

Ephraim is a former veterinary officer with the Kenyan government. He comes from close by the area where we had the Feast which, since the beginning of the 20th century, has been influenced by the Seventh Day Adventists.

His own family have been very closely associated and involved with the Seventh Day Adventists, but he was never one. His own interest was in becoming a Muslim. He had an elderly friend who was a Muslim. In polygamist relationships, oftentimes the family ties are not necessarily as close as ties with other people who become mentors. Ephraim had a mentor who was a Muslim, and he was inclined to become a Muslim.

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But as so often happens, the Eternal has other ideas for our lives. Many of us could recount ideas we had for our lives, and then the Eternal intervened. So Ephraim Abok found himself in the “Church of God Seventh Day,” and he was eventually ordained an elder, and then an Area Coordinator.

Rusinga Island in Lake Victoria, is an island, but it is joined to the mainland by a short causeway. The town of Mbita which is on the mainland, spreads out over both ends of the causeway.

The Church building of the Rusinga Island congregation is a simple adobe style with a corrugated iron roof. There are no decorate elements inside except a blackboard to write Scriptures on. The pews are simple rough timber pews with no backs.

David Paszkiewicz became known as, “Brother David.” On the Last Great Day someone managed to say, “Pasz!” That was the first time that the term, “Pasz,” was actually used by anybody.

Elisaphan Mijondo is a farmer. He is also the head of the school district and is quite a well-educated man. Farmers have oftentimes had other occupations, but almost everyone in this area is involved in one of two things: farming or fishing.



Mr and Mrs Elisaphan Mijondo

The first evening we were given a schedule (see page five). This really gives some size to Dave Paszkiewicz’s description of the Feast: “The Most Feast Ever!” Services start at about 8.30 in the morning.

From 8.30 – 9.00, there are praise songs. Silvia Bartholomew asked me if they are prepared to change their service format. I said, “Well, they start with three hymns. Three times ten minutes is 30 minutes.”

Then they have an opening prayer, which, according to the schedule lasted 15 minutes, but it didn’t. Following that they have the first message with is scheduled from 9.15 to 9.30. I thought, “This is really something: 15 minutes for the first message! These people have been learning something from somewhere.”

Then, on the Sabbath morning, Pastor Mijondo got up to give the first message and 9.30 came and went. I thought, “It’s just like the sermonette guys in Pasadena!”

I looked at the schedule again, and realised that it was a typo, because while the first message is supposed to be 9.15 to 9.30, there is nothing between 9.30 and 10.15. So the enterprising first message giver just fills in the time!

Then they have another song, another hymn – and so on they went.

By the time we get to mid-day we have had a Bible lesson or a sermon of an hour and a

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**CHURCH OF GOD 7TH DAY AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY FEAST OF TERBANACLES II
PROGRAMMEE FROM: 6TH - 14TH OCTOBER, 2006**

Hours	6 th Friday	7 th Saturday	8 th Sunday	9 th Monday	10 th Tuesday	11 th Wednesday	12 th Thursday	13 th Fri
8:30 am-9:00	Arrival	Praise songs	Praise songs	Praise songs	Praise songs	Praise songs	Praise songs	Praise s
9:00-9:15	Arrival	Opening prayer	Opening prayer	Opening prayer	Opening prayer	Opening prayer	Opening prayer	Opening prayer
9:15-9:30 am	Arrival	1 song, 10 commandments by Pastor Mijondo	1 song, Sermon by Peter Nathan	1 song, Sermon by Peter Nathan, offering	1 song, introduction by Pastor E. O. Abok	1 song, sermon by Joseph Oyugi	1 song	1 song, sermon by Pastor Githinji
10:15-10:30	Arrival	Praise songs	Praise songs	to K.M	Praise songs	Praise songs	Elder meeting	Praise s
10:30-11:15	Arrival	Bible lesson by John Onditi	Sermon by elder S. Ong'ow	Sermon by Pastor Too	Sermon by David P.M.	Sermon by Mr. Cherriyol E.O. Abok	Elder meeting	Sermon by Peter Na
11:15-11:30	Arrival	Reports	Reports	Reports	Reports	Reports	Reports	
1:30-1pm	Arrival	Sermon by Mr. Peter Nathan	Sermon by elder N. Ouma	Sermon by Pastor Too	Sermon by Peter Nathan	Sermon by Moses Ojieno Kola	PN.	
1pm-2:30	Arrival	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
2:30-3:00	Arrival	Songs and prayer	Praise songs and prayer	Praise songs and prayer	Praise songs and prayer	Praise songs and prayer	Praise songs and prayer	Recess
3:00-4:30	Arrival	Sermon by Pastor E. O. Abek (Sabbath)	Sermon by Peter Nathan	Prophecy by Pastor E. Osumba	Group discussion	Elders meeting	Sermon by Pastor E. Mijondo	Recess
4:30-6pm	Supper	Special songs	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
6pm-7pm	Special prayer by Pastor E. O. Abok	Introduction by Pastor Osumba	Supper	Supper	Supper	Supper	Supper	Supper

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quarter. We eventually have lunch for an hour and a half, and then we get back for another couple of sermons. You will notice that it ends somewhere around 4.30 to 6.00 pm.

Normally there were special songs on the Sabbath Day, but Services never stopped before sundown on the Sabbath. They just kept on going – with more songs. “The sun hasn’t gone down yet. Sunset hasn’t arrived,” so they occupy themselves that way. We ended up with three sermons a day (of an hour and a half each) and two shorter messages of about an hour and a quarter.

The people who came to the Feast site, have no funds other than what they have spent on their transport getting to the Feast, and the food that they have brought or contributed to the Feast. They have no money to go and do anything else. And it’s no use us sending them money to do anything else, because there is nothing else that’s legitimate for them to do. There are no theme parks, no movie theatres, no places that we might consider places to go for a meal. There may have been some “dive” down in Mbita where people could have eaten, but the ladies were probably cooking better food at the Feast site.

In reality, the people have nothing better to do in that they have no money and no opportunities to do anything else. The option is to literally stay and hear the Word of God. The congregation enjoyed themselves. They slept occasionally. It did get hot. It was 37+ degrees.

The music was accompanied by a cow skin drum. We had only one request at the Feast. This is quite remarkable. They asked if they could have a keyboard so that they could “retire” the cow skin drum! It looked a little the worse for wear, and they felt that a keyboard would give a better approach to services.



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They invite people to come forward and to sing a song – for a reason! They don’t have hymnals. So the question is, “Who knows a song? Come up and sing it!”

Fortunately, those from the “Church of God, an International Community” brought their hymnals with them. We were able to treat them to some special music from the hymnal which they greatly appreciated and enjoyed.

I did many things for the first time this year – including singing solo after having spent an hour and a half speaking! They wanted a hymn, and no one was forthcoming so I grabbed a hymnal and found a hymn which fitted the subject and sang to them!

The Church members provided special music. They use what I think is the ring gear from the flywheel of a car to provide a little bit of percussion to add to the musicality of the event. It was very musical. It had no cracks in it whatsoever and it had a good tune to it. It was obviously well taken care of.

When Mr Bartholomew and I were present with them last year, they presented us with a piece of paper that was rather “holey.” That is to say, it had many holes in. They said, “Do you have another copy of this?” We unfolded this very fragile document. It was what we have come to call, “The Holey African Beast Chart.” Tim Anderson and Sandy McKinney have worked hard to restore it. This chart had come from Jerusalem many years ago. I think that the termites had had a good go at it. It really was holey. They asked, “Do you have another copy of this? We need one of these.”

I said, “No,” but realising the skill sets of Tim Anderson and Sandra McKinney, I said, “We may be able to do something about it.” Tim cut the chart into pieces, scanned it, redrew the pictures, coloured them in and put it all back together again. Sandra had it printed – and, for the termites sake, laminated!

If Tim and Sandy were there, they would have been showered with kisses! They were so very grateful for receiving a renewed “Beast Chart” (see page eight). I don’t know who drew it originally, but Daniel 2 is portrayed on the left hand side, with Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, and then, associated with that in the middle, the beast from Daniel 7. On the right hand side, we have Revelation 12 and 13. These people are very, very pleased to have a Beast chart once again.

They can’t see “PowerPoint” so people write on the blackboard.

We talked about food. These people are very careful in terms of the Sabbath Day. Meals on the Sabbath Day were cold. They had been prepared beforehand. Men and women sat on separate sides of the aisle during Services, and they tended to eat lunch in separate places as well.

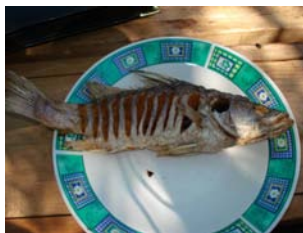


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The renovated "Beast Chart"
Courtesy of Tim Anderson and Sandy McKinney

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On one day, their noonday meal consisted of corn, beans and millet porridge. It wasn't always that way. Sometimes they had fish. The photo on the left was David's fish one day as he received it from them – and (on the right) as he turned it back in. This led to a comment to David that he eats fish “like a



white man.” They don't leave fish bones like that. Here's an example of how they eat fish (below).



The only thing left on the plate, other than the ogali grits, is the sheer backbone and the tail of the fish. They really clean it up. David found that he had ways of being measured in life – by different standards!

Psalm 127 and 128 talk of children being a blessing from the Eternal. They are a blessing from the Eternal to those who obey Him and live according to His words.

Psalm 127:3 Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward.

4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one's youth.

5 Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; They shall not be ashamed, But shall speak with their enemies in the gate.

Psalm 128 carries on and talks about the children being like olive shoots around your table. The aspect of children being a blessing is something that we can appreciate in a remarkable way.



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These are very beautiful children. David Paszkiewicz took lots of photographs of very beautiful little children. These children are part of the great blessing.

This part of the world is plagued by another problem, a problem we were introduced to as we crossed to the Feast site. We engaged a retired German couple in some conversation. The man was a professor of medicine in a German University. His wife was a doctor. They were coming back to this area to see a clinic that they had raised funds for, and had built in 1998-1999. It opened in the year 2000.

They invited us to come and see it. They talked about some of the challenges that exist in that part of the world. They had had this fundraising challenge put before them by a friend who was a nurse operating in this area. They have been working in this area for some 25 years, a long period of time. This nurse had challenged them to help out with a particular problem. This area is remote. If you were to drive from Nairobi, it is a 9-10 hours drive to get to this area. Some of the roads are very rough. It is not an easy place to access. In many ways, people in Nairobi would be very happy to forget it. It's the “wrong politics,” etc. It's a place with a problem. In the early 1990s they started to have a problem in this area with AIDS. The problem normally came from Nairobi. It was a big city problem, but it wasn't long before it was their problem as well.

This particular clinic that we were being introduced to, deals with orphans who have become orphans because of AIDS. This couple was explaining to us subsequently that in this area of Kenya (Suba), they have the responsibility, because of some funding they have received from abroad, of taking care of orphans: not all the orphans. It's just a pilot programme. They take care of an area covering some 200 elementary schools. It's hard to believe that elementary school is universally available to people in Kenya as a result of a government decree.

They have 100 orphans in each of those 200 schools that they are taking care of. If you multiply that, it comes to 20,000 orphans! As the person told us, some of the schools have two to three times that number of orphans. So we are looking at 50-60,000 orphans in one little area of the country!

Their care of the orphans is limited: three free meals a week. Hopefully somebody else provides them with some food on the other days. Some may have family members who are helping to care for them. They are provided with some level of health care – and counselling. But these are just the young people in the elementary schools. These are the little ones.

The problem is exacerbated by the location, the lake. The lake is full of fish – and the lake surface is full of fishermen. These fisherman leave their villages and spend weeks and sometimes months, fishing.

They pull into a village with the catch, sell their catch, and expend their energies on the women and girls in the village, whether they want it or not, and head back to the lake again. We talk of a “lake,” but we forget the dimensions of it. From the edge of Rusinga Island, to the Rwandan shore is 180 miles. It is the second largest body of fresh water in the world. These people fish around the lake. They are carriers of disease. They spread disease. Hardly a family is untouched by the disease! This gives you an idea of the MAGNITUDE of the problem that exists. This is just one little area of the lake.

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Uganda is to the north, Rwanda to the west, and Tanzania is to the south. All of these countries suffer the consequences of this.

These children at the Feast are a blessing from the Eternal. But they grow up in an environment where the other children don't have the same look on their face, the same *joie de vivre* that these little children express.



These are the children of the deacon on Rusinga Island. They are a remarkable little group of people.

They had, in fact, lost their Elder in the weeks leading up to the Feast because he didn't want to be associated with the *Church of God an International Community*. He left and the Church stayed. They served us and took care of us very well at the Feast. They provided for us in a remarkable way.

One goes into an area like this, and one can only come back home feeling very humbled by what we have and what we have been given.

These people hunger for the truth of God. In many ways, the Feast of Tabernacles in Rusinga is best described by turning to the eighth chapter of Nehemiah. Nehemiah has returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls of the city. Ezra was there, and the people keep the Feast of Tabernacles. They start with the Feast of Trumpets:

Nehemiah 8:1 Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded Israel.

2 So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who could hear with understanding on the first day of the seventh month.



David Paszkiewicz

... the Feast of Trumpets.

3 Then he read from it in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate from morning until midday ...

... as Mr Paszkiewicz said, “It was the Most Feast Ever!” They started in the early morning and they kept on reading! It was very much like the Feast at Rusinga.

3 ... before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all

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the people were attentive to the Book of the Law.

4 The scribe Ezra stood on a wooden platform that had been made for the purpose ...

... various priests were there with him, on his left hand.

5 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up:

6 And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground.

8 So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly (clearly), and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.

They read the Law of God all morning long! What else did the people have to do? There was nothing else to do in Jerusalem at that time. It was a Holy Day. No restaurants were open; no fast food outlets such as we experience today. They read the Law of God. They got immersed in the Word of God.

9 Then Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep." For all the people were weeping when they heard the words of the law.

10 Then he said to them, "Go, eat of the fat, drink of the sweet, and send portions to him who has nothing prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

11 So the Levites calmed all the people, saying, "Be still, for the day is holy; do not be grieved."

“Don’t cry over what happened in the past. Now is the time to rejoice that you have an understanding of God’s Law and that you can put that into practice in your life.”

12 And all the people went their way to eat and drink, to send portions and rejoice greatly, because they understood the words that were declared to them.

Some of the people had food prepared. If people didn’t have food, it was shared. They celebrated before the Eternal.

13 On the second day the heads of ancestral houses of all the people, with the priests and the Levites, came together to the scribe Ezra in order to study the words of the law.

The next day, which was not a Holy Day, they were back at it. They still came to find out more. They read that they should dwell in booths during the Feast of the seventh month.

15 and that they should announce and proclaim in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, "Go out to the mountain, and bring olive branches, branches of oil trees, myrtle branches, palm branches, and branches of leafy trees, to make booths, as it is written."

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16 So the people went out and brought them, and made booths for themselves, each on the roofs of their houses, and in their courts and in the courts of the house of God, and in the square at the Water Gate and in the square at the Gate of Ephraim.

17 And all the assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and lived in them; for from the days of Jeshua son of Nun to that day the people of Israel had not done so. And there was very great rejoicing.

18 And day by day, from the first day to the last day, he read from the book of the law of God. They kept the festival seven days; and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly, according to the ordinance.

These people were very much immersed in the Law of God. They heard the Word being read and expounded to them. That was the whole focus of their Feast.

It's the whole focus of these people's Feast in Rusinga as well. Apparently they do the same at the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Some of you may remember that in years gone by we used to have Services on all seven days of Unleavened Bread. It probably takes you back into the sixties. That's what used to happen. These people still do the same today.

They gather together, make their own way to the site, and put their food together so that everybody can eat over that period of time.

We hired a couple of cooks for them, otherwise the ladies would have spent all their day cooking. They would have had to fetch the food from the market, prepare it, cook it, clean up



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and then prepare the next meal – because everything was cooked over three very small fireplaces set up with rocks and charcoal. The water was delivered to the site by donkey cart with a great barrel of water in the back. It was very, very simple, yet people very much rejoiced in the Feast and found it very, very encouraging.

At the end a remarkable event occurred. They got up and had a farewell “Thank you” speech. They thanked YOU for all that you contributed!

They gave a list of all the things that had been contributed to the Feast: the cost of hiring tents, the chairs, the hiring of two cooks. We had to make a contribution to the food because their food budget ran a little short. They went down the list detailing almost every last penny that we had contributed to the Feast site and said, “Thank you very much for it. Thank you very much.”

I say, “Thank you very much” to you because it was from your excess second tithe that that was made possible. They appreciated that very, very much.

God appears to be calling a group of people in this area. Mr Bartholomew has been dealing with Mr Abok for almost ten years now – almost a decade. It’s not that we going to “incorporate” them within the Church of God instantaneously and suddenly increase the numbers of the Church. It will probably be something that occurs over a period of time.

When Mr Bartholomew and I met with them last year, they had a list of 25 doctrinal questions that they wanted to clarify with us. We went away and some time later they said, “We have three questions remaining.”

We said, “Let us in on the secret! What are the three questions?”

Eventually it came back. They asked about the way in which we baptise people, whether we ordain an elder who has more than one wife, and how we count Pentecost.

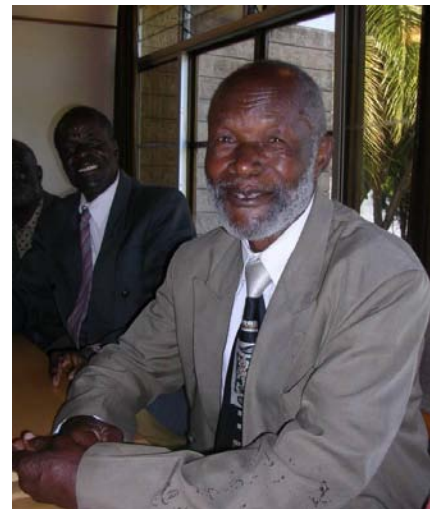
On the Friday morning of the Feast, Ephraim Abok and some of the elders got together with me and presented me with a letter to give to Mr Hulme. We went through the letter and discussed the letter and many of the ramifications of it.

We said, “Look, it’s all very well doing this – but what about these three questions you have? Shouldn’t we discuss these three questions?”

You might say, “What’s the problem with baptism?”

They, as a tradition, have used the book of Acts as the basis of baptising people.

Acts 2:38 ... "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins ...



A retired teacher, now a farmer

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The entrance to the Church building, with the part of the Abok family, Nicodemus standing next to his father with Brother David and Mrs Abok, with Nicodemus's wife and two daughters seated in front.

Those of you who can remember your baptism, will remember that we say a little more than that. We use Matthew 28 when we are baptising a person. We baptise them “into the name of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit.” That is, “by the express authority of Jesus Christ for the remission of their sins.”

They are a little concerned about how we handle it as opposed to the way in which they handle it. As we discussed this, I was trying to work out, “What really is the issue?” because we still include, “By the authority of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.”

Then somebody said, “If we accept what you do, will we have to re-baptise everybody?”

How is that for humility? I said, “No! If a person has God’s Holy Spirit, why do they need to be baptised again?”

We moved onto the second question. I said, “Who have we ordained who is polygamous?”

1 Timothy 3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife ...

We don’t go round ordaining polygamous men. I don’t know where that came from.

We moved onto the aspect of counting Pentecost, which, as many of you will appreciate, has been a thorn in the side of many over the years.

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Mr Dugger, in his keeping of the Holy Days, very much followed the Jewish example – as did Mr Armstrong at the beginning. Mr Dugger continued to keep the Day of Pentecost on 6th Sivan as the Pharisees count Pentecost. I had taken a fair amount of material with me on this, thinking that maybe some time we would have to discuss this with them, and work through some of the issues.

Maybe someone was praying for me, because when the subject came up, it was almost as though I was inspired to ask them a question. I simply asked them, “Do you accept that the Wave Sheaf Offering represented Jesus Christ?”

“Oh yes! There’s no question of that.”

I said, “Would you then tell me when the Wave Sheaf Offering was offered in the year Jesus Christ was crucified, according to your counting?”

They started thinking. Mr Dugger and the Pharisees count from the day after the first Holy Day: the 16th Abib. So, according to the Pharisees, the Wave Sheaf Offering is always offered on the 16th Abib. But in the year that Christ was crucified, the 16th Abib would have been a Friday morning. “Would you then explain the relevance of that offering to Jesus Christ who is still in the grave?”

That was a bit difficult! How do you relate the two? So I said to them, “Well, if you follow the Sadducean approach of offering the wave sheaf and counting from the day after the weekly Sabbath, then the wave sheaf was offered on the first day of the week, Sunday morning. Would you then explain the relevance of the Wave Sheaf Offering to Jesus Christ in terms of it being offered on Sunday morning?”



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“Aaah!” They understood! End of issue!

It was quite amazing to see the way in which they were prepared to change. They weren't prepared to change if they weren't convinced, but I believe the Eternal provided very clearly for their benefit – and mine – at that point in time. I've never thought of it that way myself before. I don't know whether anyone has ever written about it from that perspective before.

But when you look at the Wave Sheaf Offering being offered on the Sunday morning, and with John's comments about Jesus telling Mary not to touch Him because He has not yet ascended to His Father, and yet the disciples were able to touch Him later in that day, the offering of the wave sheaf and Jesus Christ's acceptance by His Father fits very much into place.

So they are a very happy group of people. “This makes sense.”

Obviously there are many other things that they will need to learn about as we go along. We may even learn too.

I mentioned to Mr Hulme one of the things they did in terms of the Holy Day Offerings. They had two boxes on the lectern. One was for tithes, the other was for Holy Day Offerings. People brought their Holy Day Offerings up and put them in one box. The tithes went into the other, except for one lady who struggled up the aisle with half a sack of millet. She put it underneath the box, rather than flattening it!

At the end of taking up the offering, the pastor came forward and asked God's blessing on it. He asked that God would bless it. It was very much in keeping with the example in the Temple (Numbers 6), where the priesthood were instructed to pray a blessing over the people when they brought an Offering. It was rather interesting to see the way in which they responded to some of the things, and the respect they had for the Word of God, and as I said earlier on, their humility about it all. They had nothing to prove. They just want to live by the Word of God! It is a very humbling experience to be able to go and spend a period of time with a group of people like that.

One understands how much more we have, not just in physical things, but I understand as well, just how much we have been given spiritually as well. They were thirsting for more. It was like pouring water on dry ground. They were just eager to hear more.

One of the other elders from one of the adjacent areas had been there at the beginning of the Feast and then went off to his own Feast site in another part of Kenya. In some ways I think he found it very difficult to drag himself away from that Feast, because he was hearing things about God's Word and God's way of life that he had never heard before.

During the meeting we had, Ephraim Abok brought out a pile of literature. He set it out on the table, starting off with the *Mount Zion Reporter* which was a magazine that Mr Dugger and his group in Jerusalem used to produce. It is no longer available to them.

Then there was the Correspondence Course that you would remember! And that disappeared. He went down through all this literature that they had been looking at and examining over the years of various groups. The one that was on the top was the *Church of*

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God News. He said, “This is the one that we want. This is what we want to learn from.”

So it’s quite an event to be able to sit with those people, sing with those people, speak with those people and see them keep the Feast.

As I have already said, they have already gone through their own challenges. Some have been disaffected and don’t want to keep the Feast with us.

Ephraim Abok’s intention on getting back from the Feast was to go around all the little congregations. They are little congregations. We saw one of the buildings which holds 30-40 people at the most. They might squeeze 50 in. They are not large congregations in any way whatsoever, but he was going to go around and speak to all the members in all of the congregations, and try to repair some of the damage that others have done. You might say he has a shepherd’s heart which is very encouraging!

I would ask one last thing of you: your prayers for God’s guidance for Mr Hulme as he has to make the decisions relating to these people, so that we can do what is pleasing and acceptable in God’s sight.

As you will appreciate, we have come across numerous groups in the past. Everyone of them have greeted us with their hands out in front: “Give us!”

We got a request for a keyboard. Then they said, “Could we have some hymnals to go with it, so that we can sing the hymns?” The children can read English. I guess that probably a large proportion of the congregation can read English. They may be less fluent in speaking it, and probably not comfortable in communicating in it. But most of them have an ability to read English at a certain level – which is a great blessing.

On the other hand, we actually have about 24 of the hymns in the Lua language. Mr Paszkiewicz was busily trying to learn one of their hymns at the Feast. Our brethren actually sang some of the hymns in the Lua language for them. So we have a number of opportunities whereby we can serve them and help them in terms of preparing them for the Kingdom.

As I said at the beginning, Africa is a place of contrasts. Some of the guests at the Feast in South Africa may think the Kingdom has arrived. “It’s a great place.” From what I understand, you are spoiled “absolutely rotten” by the South Africans.

On the other hand, you don’t have to go too far away from the Feast site anywhere, to realise the enormity of the problems that humanity faces, in terms of the problems that this world faces.

You might say that these little children represent the future if they are prepared to live by the Word of God and follow the precepts of God’s Law!

I look forward to keeping you updated on the progress with these people as and when that occurs. I would like to thank you for your prayers for our safe travel. I think we travelled without hitch at any one point in time. Everything worked out very well. So thank you very much for your prayers and concern for everyone. ❖