Kaigat Dispersal of 1941, East-Central African Division

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The Kaigat Dispersal of 1941 occurred when pioneer Adventists at the Kaigat Adventist Church in northern Nandi decided to relocate to other parts of Nandi, carrying with them the Adventist message to their place of settlement. This was a deliberate move to hasten the spread of Adventism in an area that had been hostile to the faith. It proved particularly effective in hastening the work and bringing new challenges.

The Coming of Adventism to Nandi

Adventism came to western Kenya when David Sparrow, a South African farmer came to Kenya in 1911 and settled among the Nandi people. Together with his wife Sallie and son Bert, they began to evangelize the Nandi people and also fellow European settlers on the plateau. They reported good progress among the two groups. In 1916 Sparrow led Caleb Kipkessio araap Busienei to become the first Nandi Adventist and they held regular Sabbath worship services on his farm between 1916 and 1931. In 1928 he urged his congregants to find a suitable place in the Nandi reserve where a new church could be established. Ezekiel Kimenjo araap Maswai moved to Kimolwet in northern Nandi hoping to establish a church there, but he eventually settled for Kaigat which was much more suitable.

In 1931 Sparrow helped establish the Kaigat Seventh-day Adventist Church inside the Nandi Reserve but not too far from his farm. Ezekiel Kimenjo struggled to get a license for the church, but it was particularly difficult due to strong resistance from rival denominations. He eventually secured one when a departing district commissioner gave him one as a concession. The work at Kaigat began to grow despite great resistance to Adventism in Nandi—led by rival denominations and the local chiefs and their assistants, as well as the government machinery. Despite this, the Kaigat church grew tremendously and after ten years the pioneers decided among themselves to disperse to various parts of Nandi to take the Adventist message deep into the district.

Impact of the Dispersal

In 1941 the Adventist pioneers decided that dispersing from Kaigat would increase the pace of evangelism in Nandi. Ezekiel Kimenjo Maswai, who was the second Nandi Adventist, decided to leave Kaigat to go to southern Nandi to establish a new mission at Samitui some 101 kilometers away, which he did. Cleophas Masai, the lay evangelist and former teacher at Kaigat was sent to Sironoi some 25 kilometers south of Kaigat and there founded Sironoi SDA Church. Job “Kalasinga” araap Too returned to his native Itigo near Lemlokwo some 17 kilometers southeast of Kaigat. It was from here that he founded Kapkonjusmoo SDA Church. Aaron Moiben araap Too left for Kungurweet 16 kilometers south from Kaigat. Caleb chose to remain at Kaigat where he was joined by Noah araap Matinyit who was sent from the Chebwai Mission to become the pastor of the congregation. Unfortunately, shortly after arrival Matinyit became ill and died, leaving a major gap in the work at Kaigat.

Soon afterwards Caleb left to organize a congregation at Chepkoijo some 12 kilometers away from Kaigat to the south. At Chepkoijo he brought to the faith Isaya araap Lelei and Paulo araap Tui and his brother Ezekiel araap Busienei. Busienei was a well-known mechanic who restored old vehicles and engines. He was the father of Prof. Philip Maiyo the Vice Chancellor of the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton.

The other person who participated in the Kaigat Dispersal of 1941 was Daniel Kimarian who went to Emdin in the O’Lessos area east of Nandi some 44 kilometers away. Before going to Emdin, Kimarian stayed briefly at Olabuliet in the Kapkagaron area eight kilometers from Kaigat conducting some evangelism work in the area before eventually settling at Emdin. At Emdin he planted a church and raised a congregation. After a while, he suddenly left for Narok but his younger brother James araap Sitienei took over and established the church at Emdin. James araap Sitienei is the father-in-law of Amon Chepkwony of UEA Baraton.

Another pioneer in the 1941 Dispersal was Silvano araap Ruto who went to Kaplemur some ten kilometers north of Kaigat. He started the church there together with Marko araap Misoi and Abraham araap Rugut. Another in the 1941 Dispersal was Elijah araap Tiliji who was sent to Kagarwo, some distance from Kaigat. Others included Joseph araap Magoi and Musa araap Kendagor as well as Ezekiel araap Maina, who founded the church at Kapkeringon some ten kilometers from Kaigat. Musa araap Sino went to Tendwo, also known as Kiptuiya, which has since moved to Tuloi some 42 kilometers from Kaigat. Tuloi is about 15 kilometers past Kapsabet Township along the Kaimosi-Chevakali road.

Finally, Jacobo araap Sitienei founded the church at Tuiyobei near Chepkunyuk past Leiwak along the Nandi-Hills-Kibio road. Daniel araap Lemengit founded the church at Kimolwet, the place where Maswai had originally gone to before settling for Kaigat. Johana Bolebo araap Kemei and his brother Daudi Bororiet araap Cheruiyot founded the church at Chepkatet not far from Kaigat.

The initial agreement amongst the Kaigat pioneers was that each of them would return to their own sub-tribes and clans where they would be better accepted. Daniel Kimarian went to his Kamelilo and Musa araap Sino went to his Tbing’ot people. In moving to Samitui, Ezekiel araap Maswai was returning to his own Kapchepkendi people who lived in Southern Nandi.
Despite great resistance, the Kaigat Dispersal of 1941 was largely responsible for the rapid spread of Adventism among the Nandi people, leading tens of thousands to join the denomination through the years. At Independence, many of the Nandi in the Reserve moved to the former White Highlands, taking the faith with them there. Today there are more than 100 churches in the Nandi Station under the Greater Rift Valley Conference.†

**SOURCES**


**NOTES**


