



The Living God Ministries, Inc.

Montgomery & Spanish Fort, Alabama

January 24, 2020

We are a Little Flock

Warm hellos to you dear brethren, co-workers, and spiritual family here on the Coast of the Gulf of Mexico and scattered children of God from our offices here in Spanish Fort.

Several years ago my wife and I traveled to Queensland, Australia and spent several days there with dear friends and members of the Body of Christ. We had an excellent trip, but I remember trying to recover a bit, after having crossed over the International Date Line on our way back to the U.S. Where we lived in Charlotte, NC. The time zone was 15 hours behind where we had been for that week. It seems like just yesterday we took this trip.

While in Australia, I was privileged to speak to a smaller congregation in Australia, there in Claremont. We enjoyed our visit with 26 family members and brethren there on the Sabbath.

When viewed from the perspective of the whole Christian professing community, we are indeed a very small group or as Luke penned the words of Christ "a little flock". *"Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom"* (Luke 12:32). We see the numbers of the true body of believers even considerably smaller in past centuries.

While reviewing several accounts of early church history in North America written by several authors, I found some interesting tidbits. They went to great effort to gain as accurate information as they could to support what they wrote. I respect their efforts to uncover the facts about the history of the church before my time and theirs. It is an inspiring and sobering story of those who stood up against false teachings, resisted preachers who tried to gain a personal following, and were persecuted by some of their own brethren who turned on them as some turned away from the Scriptures.

The roots of Sabbath keeping congregations in North America go back to England in the 17th century. Here's a quote from Ivor C. Fletcher's book "The Incredible History of God's True Church." Quoting excerpts from Chapter Ten -- The Persecuted Church:
During most of the seventeenth century, up to 1687, freedom of religion was available only to those who followed the precepts of mainstream Protestant theology in the form of the established Church of England.

Before these freedoms were granted, the Church of God in England had experienced a time of severe trials. It was not without good reason that these people often called themselves the "Poor" Churches of God. Fines for failure to attend the Sunday services of the established church of 20 pounds a month might seem modest in today's society, but such a sum three centuries ago represented the income of the average employee for two years.

Religion dominated the thoughts of many of the nation's scholars during this period; the literature published at this time is full of religious debate and controversy. The Sabbath in particular was the subject of almost endless discussion. Some understood the academic reasons for keeping the seventh day, but only a few were really willing to obey God in the face of strong opposition.

John Trask, one of the most powerful speakers of his day, began to preach. He understood not only the truth of God's Sabbath but also the facts regarding clean and unclean meats.

Trask is said to have founded the Mill Yard Church in London shortly after his arrival in the capital from Salisbury. At least one writer, however, has traced the establishment of this church back to 1580 -- long before the time of Trask. As the records of this church up to 1673 were destroyed in the fire of 1790, it is impossible to know the facts with any degree of certainty.

Although most of these persecutions involved fines or imprisonment, at least two of the leaders of God's people at this time suffered direct martyrdom. One of those who gave his life in this manner was John James.

"It was about this time (A. D. 1661), that a congregation of Baptists holding the seventh day as a Sabbath, being assembled at their meeting-house in Bull-Stake Alley, (London) the doors being open, about three o'clock P.M. (Oct. 19), whilst Mr. John James was preaching, one Justice Chard, with Mr. Wood, an head-borough, came into the meeting place. Wood commanded him in the King's name to be silent and come down, having spoken treason against the King. But Mr. James, taking little or no notice thereof, proceeded in his work.

John James was arrested and brought to trial, found guilty under the new law against non-conformity. He was sentenced to the barbaric fate of being hung, drawn and quartered. The Mill Yard Church in London is mentioned in the correspondence with the Sabbath keepers in America. I will mention a little more of the history of the Church of God in England next time. There were several small congregations in the London area. "The historic Mill Yard Church probably dates back to 1607, but one authority (Daland) traces its establishment to 1580. One

of its earliest pastors was John Trask (1617-1619). Later ministers included Dr. Peter Chamberlen, John James, William Sellers and Henry Soursby.

"In 1646 seven congregations are said to have met in London, but by the time that Francis Bampfield wrote in 1677, persecution had reduced this number to three. The locations of those three congregations were Mill Yard, Bell Lane, and Cripplegate." (Chapter Twelve, Fletcher)

You and I can compare some of these leaders and brethren with those mentioned in the Hebrews 11 which is often referred to as "the faith chapter". "Still others had trial of mocking's and scourging's, yes, and of chains and imprisonment . . . of whom the world was not worthy." (Hebrews 11:36, 38)

So not only were they small in numbers, a "little flock" but they endured difficulties that most of us have not yet faced to the same degree.

Friends, let us seek and ask God for the courage and perseverance to hold to the precious truths of God in the face of increasing opposition to those principles of God's word. Let us not be concerned about how many we are or how large, but focus on what God has called us to live and do.

I do not think it will be long before we once again will be facing religious persecution for obeying God's truth here in the United States...indeed it is coming.

May God bless and encourage you on His upcoming Sabbath, and I wish you good health, spiritually and physically.

Our prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Please do pray for us as well.

-Scott Hoefker

(Pastor, *The Living God Ministries Gulf Coast*)

The schedule for this week's Sabbath is:

January 24th / Friday: Evening Praise Sacrifice to welcome God's Sabbath - 6:30 pm (via Teleconference live connect with Stephen Glover and Friends.)

January 25th / Saturday: Spirit and Truth Worship Services - 10:15 am, with services held in **Montgomery and Spanish Fort** at our normal **10:15 a.m.** (with *phone conference connection* available from Montgomery and *Live Webcast* from Spanish Fort). A noon "potluck" meal will be enjoyed and shared in in Spanish Fort shortly after worship services.

January 25th / Saturday: Malachi 3:16 Sabbath Fellowship (Interactive Bible Discussion) - **3:30 pm** from Spanish Fort. (Connecting live with all via telephone conference).

Next Sabbath's Schedule:

January 31st / Friday: Evening Praise Sacrifice to welcome God's Sabbath - 6:30 pm (via Teleconference live connect with Stephen Glover and Friends.)

February 1st / Saturday: Spirit and Truth Worship Services - 10:15 am, with services held in **Montgomery and Spanish Fort** (All are welcomed and encouraged to connect live to Worship Services via our normal phone conference from Montgomery *or* Live Webcast from Spanish Fort). There will be a pot-luck noon meal in **Spanish Fort** shortly after Worship Services.

February 1st / Saturday: Malachi 3:16 Sabbath Fellowship (Interactive Bible Discussion) - **3:30 pm** from Spanish Fort. (Connecting live with all via telephone conference).

Telephone Ministry (English): Call **1-712-770-4700**; then, when asked, enter Code **112165 #** to join.
(Note: All callers are muted and must press *6 to comment and *6 to resume mute.)
All times are listed in Central Standard Time zone.

Our Daily Bread Recordings

Sunday through Saturday / Our Daily Bread [listen anytime 24/7 to a recorded 15 minute message] Call 1-712-770-4709 (note this call in number is different and ends in "9"), then when asked, enter code 112165# [reference code numbers are on "Spiritual Fellowship Opportunities" on this website <http://www.tlministriesgc.org> or at "Resources/Archives" on <http://www.haggai114.net>]

Daily Fellowship Opportunities

Sunday – Friday / **Morning Sacrifice** (Prayers & Scripture Reading) at 6:00 a.m.

Sundays / **The Minor Prophets** (Interactive) at 6:30 p.m. [Whit, Logan & Friends]

Mondays / Africa Discipleship at 7:00 a.m. [Stephen & Moses]

Almond Branch Fellowship at 6:30 p.m. (Interactive) (Stephen & Friends)

Tuesdays / **Haggai Fellowship** (Interactive) at 6:30 p.m. (Interactive) [Stephen & Friends]

Wednesdays / Africa Discipleship at 7:00 a.m. [Stephen & Moses]

1st & 3rd Wednesday / **Sons of God Fellowship** (Young men training) at 6:30 p.m. [Stephen & Friends]

2nd & 4th Wednesday / **Lydian's Fellowship** (Ladies) at 6:30 p.m. [Esther/Gayle/Laura & Friends]

Thursdays / **Mt. Carmel Fellowship** (Interactive) at 6:30 p.m. [Hoefkers & Friends]

Scott Hoefker, Pastor

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