



The Living God Ministries, Inc.

Montgomery & Spanish Fort, Alabama

January 31, 2020

Others Came First

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

In my weekly pastor's letter last Friday we finished with *"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."*

We discussed the fact that we are indeed a "Little Flock". We also looked at a little of the history of the church of God in England. There are bits and pieces here and there woven with the history of the true church in Europe.

Sometimes if we're not careful we can begin to think somehow we have "the corner on the market" so to speak of observing God's Sabbath, and/or following His Truths from the Bible. Some might think or state "they are the only true church".

The fact is, *others came first*. Not just in Old and New Testament times, but in the relative history of the age we live in.

"By the end of the 1500s, congregations that the world labeled -"Sabbatarian Anabaptists" had appeared and were growing in Central Europe, Germany and England. They were termed Sabbatarian because they taught and observed the seventh-day Sabbath. They were called Anabaptists, meaning re-baptizers, because they refused to accept as Christians those who had merely been sprinkled as babies. They taught that baptism was only for adults who had come to believe the Gospel and had repented of their sins (cf. Acts 2:38)." (God's Church through the Ages, J. Ogwyn)

Some may be familiar with a man named John James, (one of the leaders of the church of God in London in the 1660's). Another leader during that time was Francis Bampfield. His autobiography, *The Life of Shem Acher*, (a pseudonym) has been preserved in the British

Museum Library. From 1662 until his death in 1683, he spent most of his time either in prison or on the run from the authorities of England. In 1686 Edward Stennett, another courage filled leader who strongly preached about the Sabbath, moved from Wallingford to London where he apparently gathered together the members of Francis Bampfield's Pinner's Hall Sabbatarian Church. This congregation had been dispersed a few years earlier at the time of Bampfield's imprisonment and death. It was at this time of persecution of the church in England that Stephen Mumford and his wife, members of the Church in London, left England for the New World and came to Rhode Island in 1664.

"Upon arriving in Rhode Island, the only American colony founded upon the principle of religious liberty, the Mumfords began to fellowship with Baptists in Newport. They weren't quiet, however, about their belief in the Sabbath. In 1665, within the first year of the Mumfords arrival, Tracy Hubbard started keeping the Sabbath with them, becoming the first convert in America. Shortly afterward, her husband Samuel joined her. In 1671 *the first Sabbath-keeping church in America* officially began with seven members. William Hiscox was the first pastor of the church, serving from 1671 until his death in 1704. In 1708 a second church was officially organized in Westerly, Rhode Island (later renamed Hopkinton)." (God's Church through the Ages, J. Ogwyn)

Mumford was sent to Newport, Rhode Island, by the Bell Lane Sabbatarian Church of London. It appears he was not a minister. It too seems likely that Stephen Mumford decided to migrate across the Atlantic Ocean because of the difficult circumstances in which not only the Seventh Day Baptists but other Baptists and Dissenters found themselves in England at that time.

"When King Charles II came to the throne in 1660 the measure of religious freedom that had been permitted during the time of Oliver Cromwell was not to continue. Several Acts of Parliament were passed designed to enforce uniformity of religion in Britain, which in effect meant conformity to the teachings of the Church of England. The third Act was the Conventicle Act of 1664 which forbade the assembly of more than five people in addition to the family of the house for religious services except according to the Prayer Book, under penalty of fines and transportation. For the third offense they could be banished to the American plantations, excepting New England and Virginia. If they should return or escape, death was the penalty. . . It may have been this Act which led Stephen Mumford to decide to migrate to Rhode Island, to banish himself by so doing rather than wait for the Government to do it." (The Incredible History of God's True Church-Chapter 10, Fletcher)

"In 1708 a second church was officially organized in Westerly, Rhode Island (later renamed Hopkinton). Throughout the eighteenth century, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania and New Jersey

seem to have been the main areas of Sabbath-keeping churches. During this time, German Sabbath keepers immigrated to Pennsylvania. Peter Miller was the best known minister of the German Sabbath-keepers in Pennsylvania and was a friend of Benjamin Franklin." (God's Church through the Ages, J. Ogwyn)

As one digs into the past, we find a lot more about the history of those who observed the Sabbath. Many have visited the graveyard in Newport, RI and observed the grave stone markers of Stephen Mumford and other early Sabbath-keepers. It is moving and causes reflection regarding the story of those who came before us.

In the future we will examine some of the challenges and shortfalls of Sabbath-keepers trying to fellowship or meet with others who observed Sunday and held to other non-biblical practices. This will be a vivid example of what we read in God's Word "Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?" (Amos 3:3) Daily we must choose to follow God. What we believe and do must be in agreement with God and His Word.

It does matter what we believe and observe. Others came before us and were tried and tested to see if they would stand strong for the Truths of God. Make no doubt about it, we will be too...

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:

February 1st / 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 *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).

Next Sabbath's Schedule:

February 7th / Friday: Evening Praise Sacrifice to welcome God's Sabbath - 6:30 pm (via Teleconference live connect with Stephen Glover and Friends.)

February 8th / Saturday: Spirit and Truth Worship Services - 10:15 am, with services held in **Montgomery** (those in our Spanish Fort congregation and all others are welcomed and encouraged to connect live to Worship Services via our normal *telephone conference* from Montgomery). There will be a pot-luck fellowship noon meal in **Montgomery** shortly after Worship Services are finished.

February 8th / Saturday: Our *LifeSouth Community Blood Centers* **Blood Drive** will be available after the noon meal.

February 8th / Saturday: Malachi 3:16 Sabbath Fellowship (Interactive Bible Discussion) - **3:30 pm** from Montgomery. (Connecting live with all via telephone conference).

February 8th / Saturday: Monthly Family Meeting with our Congregations **5:00 p.m.** (Connecting live with Spanish Fort and others 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]

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