

Keystone, CO	708
Lowell, MA	350
Minneapolis, MN	300
Hull, PQ	N/A
Total	12,007

As asked in my first question, what can we all do to better preach the gospel and to better serve our congregations and ministry? We hope that local congregations discuss this over the next few months and give us input as we unite our efforts to serve God. This kind of healthy discussion will also occur with our regional pastors as we visit with one another over the coming months.

Victor Kubik

AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE...

"The Separation . . ."

by Jim Franks

The history of the Sabbatarians during the Colonial period in America is one of the most remarkable stories ever told. As far as we know, it was in 1664 that Stephen Mumford and his wife Anne came to Newport, Rhode Island from England, as the first Sabbath keepers in North America. They were looking for a fresh start in a free land and Rhode Island offered them the best opportunity. Roger Williams had founded the colony on the principle of religious freedom—as a result it served as a haven for persecuted religious groups. This was significant to Stephen and Anne Mumford since their religious beliefs were the subject of opposition by others.

There were only two churches in Newport at the time— the First Baptist Church of Newport and the Quaker Church (the Baptists & the Quakers were particularly drawn to Rhode Island.) The Mumfords chose to attend the First Baptist Church, although there is no record of their ever having sought official membership. Observing the Sabbath each 7th day they made several friends and within a short period of time, found themselves with nine others. They would meet together for prayer and encouragement on the Sabbath and then commune with the other members on Sunday morning in the First Baptist Church. This continued for several years with relatively few problems. After all, the Baptists were tolerant people. They too had experienced the strong arm of religious persecution. This relative calm was broken in 1669 when four of the Sabbath keepers (Nicolas Wild, John Solomon and their wives) rejected the Sabbath. Mr. and Mrs. Solomon had been among the first to accept the Sabbath, while Mr. and Mrs. Wild had been looked upon as being among the most steadfast. The seven who remained looked upon this as a great apostasy. They had difficulty continuing with people who had rejected the "truth", although they had no problem with those who had never known the truth.

The story now takes an unusual twist. We are deeply indebted to Samuel Hubbard for painstakingly recording the events of this historic period of time. His journal

provides a detailed description of the events that occurred over the next two years leading up to the separation of the Sabbath keepers from the First Baptist Church. Hubbard was one of the seven remaining Sabbath keepers who was still meeting with the Mumfords, along with his wife, Tacy, and daughter, Rachel Langworthy. It was at this point that the resident elders of the Baptist Church became involved. They were: Dr. John Clarke, Mark Luker, Joseph Tory, and Obadiah Holmes. The minutes of the meetings that took place between the Sabbath keepers and the ministers of the Baptist Church have been preserved in the Seventh Day Baptist Memorial, Volume 1. This story is also told in an Historical Address given by William Lewis Burdick at the Bi-Centennial Celebration of the Hopkinton Church in 1908. The presentation was later printed in booklet form. From these sources we can follow the story of what happened to these people leading up to their separation from the First Baptist Church in Newport and the establishment of the first Sabbath keeping Church in America in December of 1671.

Beginning with the controversy in 1669, the ministry of the Baptist Church began to preach against those who were continuing to keep the Sabbath. At the conclusion of the Sunday services those who were still in attendance (there were five Sabbath keepers attending on Sunday, since the Mumfords had now ceased) took the occasion to defend the Sabbath. Many in the church were pained by this contention. From Burdick's account we read: *"Mr. Hiscox desired some to beseech the elders to forbear such kind of preaching, or else they should be put upon . . . to leave the Church, if they could not find quietness within."* William Hiscox was generally the spokesman for this small group and he later became the first pastor of the Sabbatarians who began meeting on their own in 1671. Burdick continues: *"Hereupon, for a few weeks, there was forbearance; so that they went on in church fellowship. . . though many times some of the church would say to them, 'that if they were of their minds as to the Seventh-day Sabbath, they could not have communed with them that did oppose it;' to which seeming reflection they answered, 'that they were loath to separate if they could be quiet.' And thus*

for some years they walked."

In June of 1671, the peace was again broken by Elder Holmes who attacked those who observed the Sabbath in a sermon. On the day of his attack, William Hiscox challenged him afterwards to clearly identify those of whom he spoke. The atmosphere was so tense that a full meeting of the church was called for that very next Thursday. All the elders were present and so were the five Sabbath keepers who still remained in the fellowship of the Baptist Church. The Sabbath observers presented their grievances with the church. According to Burdick in his address the grievances were: "(1) the harshness of the Baptists' preaching; (2) the apostasy of the four who had turned away from the Sabbath, and (3) the fact that the Baptist elders really had taught that the law was abolished." Samuel Hubbard wrote a letter to his children in December of 1671 in which he documented what happened at the meeting: "Bro. Hiscox spoke publicly, admirably of free grace by Jesus Christ, not by the works of the law, though holy just and good; no, not by baptism and the like, calling sinners to repentance for the breach of the law, etc. . . Then Bro. Hiscox began, but they would not let him, — everyone must answer for himself, lest others be led by him. So they named me, but I would not be the first; then my wife laid down three grounds; then Bro. Hiscox laid down his grounds, three also. . . Then Bro. Tory said, 'Bro. Hubbard you may lay down your grounds, if you will.' I answered, 'I believe there is but one God, creator of all things by his word at first, and then made the 7th day and sanctified it, rested on it, and was refreshed, never altering it, commanding it to be kept holy, etc., that Christ, our Lord, established it, Matt. 5, the holy apostles established it, did not say it was holy, but is holy, just, and good, and in the Rev. the dragon made war with the woman's seed that kept the commandments of God, etc.' . . They replied fiercely, it was a tumult, J. Tory stopped them at last. . . Another ground was Obe. Holmes saying we had left Christ, gone to Moses, etc."

It appears that two more meetings took place with these two groups. The discussions were quite heated and the rift between the two groups grew wider. The Sabbath keepers were being accused of having returned to Moses and of trying to earn their salvation. They explained that

they had no such belief, but that they could not stand for the law being done away. Following are more excerpts from the Seventh Day Baptist Memorial, Vol. 1 taken from Samuel Hubbard's writings: "The next meeting was spent in endeavoring to remove Mr. Hiscox's grounds, and there was much reasoning concerning the elders denying the ten words to be any rule to the Gentiles; they then endeavoring to show, that they were never commanded to keep any part of the law; to which those who were in the observation of the seventh-day replied, 'that under the former dispensation there was a church and a world as there now is; and as it is the duty of the world now to repent and believe in the Gospel, so it was the duty of the world to be proselyted and joined to the then church of God.' This was by most of the elders denied, by affirming that God made not the covenant with the Gentiles; and therefore no sin in them, though they walked contrary to it. And others of the church said, 'they did not think the Gentiles would ever be blamed for the breach of the ten words.' . . Upon which Mr. Hiscox said, 'Bro. Holmes, you are not right there; you shan't slip your neck out of the collar so; for the ground of our difference is, that you and others deny God's law.' To which Mr. Holmes replied, with much concern, 'You are deluded. . .'. Then Mr. Hiscox answered, 'You have said more than this before now, as that we have denied Christ, and had not conscience toward God in these matters.' Upon which Mr. Holmes said, 'I again say, I do judge you have and still do deny Christ, and that you have not conscience in it, for if you had, you could not have walked with us till now, but must have done otherwise, for had I been of your judgment, I must have stoned you all to death before now.'"

Events went downhill from there. The meetings became shouting matches! There was little hope that the groups could stay together. Hubbard continues in his letter: "At that meeting, everything appeared dark, as though there was no likelihood of accommodation to be one church. Hereupon Mr. Hiscox desired to propose something to the church, which was, that since there was an apparent difference between them, and if they could not go on as formerly, he, in behalf of the rest, desired the church seriously to consider, whether it would not be more for the glory of God, and both their comforts, to let

them have their liberty to walk by themselves, as they were persuaded, and so to maintain as much love as possible, seeing there is no likelihood of their agreeing. . . To which Mr. Tory replied, 'I will never yield to it as long as I live;' and Mr. Holmes backed the expression, 'Nor I neither.' Upon which Mr. Clarke said, 'What rule have you for this matter?' Mr. Hiscox answered, 'To do to others as we would they should do to us; would not you have had the same liberty at Seconk, and elsewhere, when you differed from other churches that you had walked with? . . There is that word, How can two walk together except they are agreed? — we differ in matters of great weight, though you make light of them;. . . Bro. Deuel and Bro. Mann and others say we have left Christ and gone to Moses, because we plead the morality of the ten words; others say we undervalue Christ by taking precepts from Moses.' . . Hereupon Bro. Wild made answer, that 'they should be tender of conscience, if they walked orderly, according to Christ's last will and testament after his resurrection.' Mr. Hiscox answered, 'Not the commands of Christ before his death? Ain't they as binding as those after?' To which Mr. Tory replied, 'I am sorry for your ignorance.'"

The conclusion of the matter took place on December 7, 1671. The entry in Samuel Hubbard's journal reads as follows: "By the time he had so far proceeded, there was so much disorder in the meeting, that the other things were not spoken to. Upon which Mr. Hiscox desired to offer some scriptures to prove that it was lawful to set precepts of holiness from the Old Testament, as that of Peter, 'Be ye holy, because it is written, be ye holy, for I am holy,' and some other places. Hereupon Mr. Clarke said, 'You undervalue the Son to make precepts from the servant.' Mr. Tory then said to the church, that he thought they had spent time enough with Mr. Hiscox, etc. All these left the church, Dec. 7th, 1671." The final straw was when Elder Holmes declared that there was "no Sabbath but Christ." Sixteen days after this separation, on December 23rd, 1671, the first Sabbath keeping Church in America was organized. The following statement was recorded by Samuel Hubbard for posterity: "We entered into a church covenant the 23rd day of Dec., 1671, (old style). Wm. Hiscox, Stephen Mumford,

Samuel Hubbard, Roger Baster, Sister (Tacy) Hubbard, Sister Mumford, Sister Rachel Langworthy." From this meager beginning of seven people, grew one of the largest churches in Rhode Island. It all began with the separation in December of 1671.

These events took place over 300 years ago. It is amazing to see how much society has changed in that length of time, but it is just as amazing to see how many religious issues are the same. The Sabbatarians vigorously rejected the idea of salvation by works. They loudly proclaimed their belief in the grace of God and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for salvation. Yet their proclamations fell on deaf ears. They were accused of denying Christ and wanting to return to Moses. The ministers in the First Baptist Church of Newport, Rhode Island, were teaching that the law was done away, that Christ had fulfilled the law for us, that the Sabbath rest was fulfilled in Christ. The small group of Sabbath keepers vigorously opposed these ideas until it became obvious that they could no longer meet together with those of such divergent views. Their request for a peaceful separation was denied. Yet, separate they did, not because of ulterior motives or ill feelings, but because of their beliefs regarding God's law and its place in the life of the Christian. Solomon seems to have said it best in Ecclesiastes 1:9 "The thing that hath been it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun."

A PASTOR WRITES...

"You Shall Know Them by Their Fruits..."

by Doug Horchak

There are many ways that the Bible describes Christians: salt of the earth, saints, brethren, children of God. One of the first terms used by Jesus Christ to describe his disciples was "light." In Matthew 5:14 Christ told them, "Ye are the light of the world..." Just what did Christ mean and, more specifically, in what way does "being a light" apply to the very sensitive period of transition we are all going through in God's Church?

There can be no denying that the Bible is replete with illustrations of the importance of being a good example. God gave his chosen people, the nation of Israel, an opportunity to be an example of governmental, civic, and moral excellence in the eyes of the nations around them (Deut 4:6). The "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16), the New Testament Church of God, also has been given a great opportunity to be an example of God's way of life in action (1 Peter 2:9). Just how do these scriptures, describing Christians as "light", apply to the present period of time? Many of God's people have found it necessary, for conscience sake, to separate themselves from their previous affiliation in order to continue their faith and belief by fellowshiping with those of like mind. Do the words of Jesus Christ and the apostles address the attitude and approach we should have towards those of a different belief and doctrine?

Some answers to these important questions are contained in the profound statements made by Jesus Christ in the 7th Chapter of Matthew. In verses 1-3 we read that Christ teaches his disciples that they should not judge others. And it's the same today, whether it be our perception of a person's values or motives, or something so fundamental as their doctrinal belief or religious affiliation. In such cases, Christ tells us that we should not judge (spiritually criticize or condemn—that is not our job. It is important to add that Christ did not say in these verses that others may not be in error or making mistakes—however, we should always strive to recognize error. In Matthew 7, however,

his emphasis was that his disciples, have a duty to focus on their own faults, on their own shortcomings. Applying these words of Jesus in our present circumstances, it is not appropriate for us to be criticizing or condemning any individual or group. If we have faith in the Word of God and are convicted about our beliefs, if we see our personal need for overcoming and growth—that is where our attention needs to be focused, while at the same time we recognize and avoid error.

Later in the 7th chapter, Christ spoke of "false prophets" to further his themes of example and discernment: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither [can] a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." (Matt 7:15-20)

We should note some very important principles in these verses:

- 1) False teachers are known ultimately by their fruits.
- 2) As with the growth and maturation of a plant or tree, it takes time for good or bad fruit to be produced and only then is it obvious to those around.

In the present situation we must learn to leave to God a task that has always been his to accomplish: the spiritual calling of those individuals that he is working with—(John 6:44, 1 Cor. 2:9,10). It is always a Christian's duty to be ready to give an answer to those that sincerely ask about the hope that lies within us (1 Peter 3:15). However, it is important to remember that it is by our example and our fruits that we can fulfill our responsibility of showing the world around us the attitude and mind of Jesus Christ.

When Christ told his disciples that they were to be like a light he expanded his "beatitudes" which epitomize the Christ-like characteristics and attitudes of a converted mind. He proclaimed blessings upon those who are meek, poor in spirit, merciful, pure in heart, and who are peacemakers.

As we take on the challenge that God has given to his people at this time—to