

# *Witnessing To Sunday-keepers*

This more concerns the church, but it concerns every one of us too. How we explain the Sabbath-keeping part of our beliefs/commandment-keeping to a Sunday-observer (or any part of our doctrinal beliefs, for that matter) makes a critical difference in the effectiveness of our witness. In our recent historic past under Mr. Armstrong, we slammed Sunday-keepers pretty badly. Now those in the various Sabbath-keeping Churches of God which came out of the Worldwide Church of God continue this approach unmercifully, and to their own great hurt. In today's post-Christian era, it may be far easier for God to draw someone who is already pre-disposed to believe in God, than those who are openly hostile to him. Is there a historic precedent for taking a friendly approach in our apologetics toward Sunday-observing Christians? Yes there is. Looking back into our Sabbatarian Church of God in Rhode Island history from the 1600s through 1700s, our early brethren took a far different approach to witnessing to Sunday-keepers. When Stephen Mumford landed in Newport in the Colony of Rhode Island in 1664 with his wife Ann, having come from the Bell Lane Church of God in London, there was no one to fellowship with, no Sabbath-keeping Church of God in Rhode Island. There was the 2<sup>nd</sup> Baptist Church in Newport, so he and his wife Ann kept the Sabbath by themselves, and then went on over to John Clarke's and Obediah Holmes' 2<sup>nd</sup> Baptist Church and fellowshipped amongst them on Sundays. Soon there were nine other people, former Baptists, observing God's Sabbath with the Mumfords. The Church of God in Newport, Colony of Rhode Island had started up, and it had started up by the means of friendly fellowship with Sunday-observing Baptist Christians. Although the Sabbath-keeping pastors were adept at evangelizing the unsaved masses, as the Lollards proved, they also used this method of befriending and fellowshipping with the Baptists. They continued to draw many Baptist converts as they moved west across the American continent from the 1700s through 1800s.

## *Modern-day Example*

There is the recent example of George Burdick, who runs a Sabbath-observing house-church. (By the way, George's ancestor Ruth Burdick, was a member of Mumford's original Sabbath-keeping Church of God congregation in Newport, Colony of Rhode Island.) Not too far in the past George befriended a Sunday-keeping Christian online, and she soon was attending George's

Sabbath-keeping house-church, fully convinced of the Sabbath and Holy Day observance of Leviticus 23, and all due to *Gentle George's* soft-spoken approach to the whole matter. One key, neither George nor anyone of us in his fellowship **ever** implied to this fine lady that she didn't have the Holy Spirit, or that the Holy Spirit was **just working around her**. That kind of statement is an insult of the gravest magnitude, to say something like that. Whether God's got his Holy Spirit within some Sunday-keepers or not is not an issue we should get involved in (especially since none of us can see spirit), it's God's business. Amazingly enough, once we got to know this wonderful lady, it became plainly evident that she did indeed have the indwelling Holy Spirit active in her, and well before her change-over to Sabbath observance. Going back to the early Sabbath-keeping Churches of God in Rhode Island, during the Revolutionary War most if not all the Baptist pastors in Rhode Island were of the political extraction of the Rebels and against English rule, so they had to flee and go into hiding. The Sabbath-keeping Church of God pastors eschewed any affiliation with politics and holding of government office whatsoever, so the British left them alone. The Baptist pastors, before fleeing, asked the Sabbath-keeping Church of God pastors to look after their flocks, and give sermons on Sunday for the members of their congregations, which they had to desert for a time. So the Sabbath-keeping Church of God pastors were doing double-duty, preaching to their own congregations on the Sabbath, Saturday, and then preaching to the Baptist congregations in Rhode Island on Sundays. The Sabbath-keeping Churches of God grew in membership from the 1700s through 1800s into the multiple thousands, the town of Westerly being composed entirely of Sabbath-keepers. There is a good article within this section which clearly and plainly proves the Sabbath has not been abrogated for believers in Jesus Christ. But **how** we use this information in our witness to others, especially Sunday-keepers, is just as important as the information itself. I think it is high-time we took a lesson from the history of our Sabbath-keeping Church of God forebears in our witness to others, especially those who are pre-disposed to belief in Jesus Christ.

Related link:

For a history of our Sabbath-keeping Churches of God in the Colony of Rhode Island, see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/history/historycog1.htm>

Has the Sabbath Been Abrogated? See  
<http://www.unityinchrist.com/wwcofg/Has%20the%20Sabbath%20Been%20Abrogated.htm>