

MINUTES
OF THE
SIXTH ANNUAL SESSION
OF THE
ALABAMA STATE CONFERENCE
OF THE
FREE WILL BAPTIST

Convened with

BLOCTON FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH
Bibb County Alabama, November 23, 24 and 25, 1916.

OFFICERS:

Woods Springfield Moderator.
J. E. Hodgins Assistant Moderator.
C. B. Searcy Secretary and Treasurer.

The next session will convene with Mount Harmony Church, Lamar county,
Alabama, on Thursday before the 4th Sunday in November, 1917.

Ayden, N. C.

Free Will Baptist Printing Co.,

1917

PROCEEDINGS

The Sixth Annual Session of the State Conference of The Free Will Baptist of the State of Alabama, convened with Blocton Free Will Baptist church at West Blocton, Bibb county, on Thursday night before the fourth Sabbath in November, 1916, at 7 o'clock p. m. Prayer and praise service by Rev. E. M. Stamps; responded to by Rev. Woods Springfield. After which adjourned to meet Friday morning at 9:30 o'clock a. m. Prayer by the Moderator.

Friday morning Conference met pursuant to adjournment. The house was called to order by the Moderator. Prayer by Bro. J. E. Hodgens, also prayer by Bro. J. R. Weaver. The Moderator then announced that the house was ready for any business that may come before it.

A call for delegates from the different Associations as follows:

1. Bear Creek Association not represented.
2. Kahaba Association, J. M. Shirley, G. W. Hollis, C. E. Lowery, Rev. J. E. Hodgens, Rev. A. J. Davis, Rev. E. L. Stamps.
3. Jasper Association not represented.
4. Liberty Association not represented.
5. Mt. Moriah Association, Rev. J. M. Spencer, Rev. T. L. Walker and Woods Springfield. Invitation was then offered to any other Association that wished to affiliate with us.

6. Vernon Association came forward and was admitted to membership, by letter and delegates. Letter was read and the following named delegates were seated in the body as follows: W. D. Wheeler, W. J. McGee, R. H. Yerby.

7. The South Eastern Association was admitted by delegate, C. B. Searcy.

8. The State Line Association was also admitted to membership in this body, by proxy or letter from Bro. G. W. Cherry to C. B. Searcy, assuring it would be all right to enroll The Liberty Association as a member of this body.

9. On motion The Morning Star Association was admitted to membership in this body by proxy. The right hand of fellowship was then extended to them by the Moderator. The body then went in the election of Moderator and Clerk, which resulted in the choice of Woods Springfield, Moderator; and J. E. Hodgens, Assistant Moderator; and C. B. Searey, Secretary and Treasurer, and also to act as corresponding Secretary. The Moderator then called for corresponding delegates, a letter was read, and on motion read and adopted and ordered spread on the minutes of meeting from Arkansas State Convention which is as follows:

Russelville, Arkansas, November 21, 1916.

To the Alabama State Conference of the Free Will Baptist, which is to convene with New Blocton church, Bibb county, Alabama.

The Arkansas State Convention of Free Will Baptist in regular session, October 27, 1916, voted to send a letter of correspondence to your Conference, requesting in return a letter and delegates to our next State Association, which will convene with Moreland church, twelve miles north of Russellville, Arkansas, on Friday night before the fourth Sunday in October, 1917.

The Free Will Baptist is in a prosperous condition, and our State Association was well attended. Eight subordinate Associations were represented by delegates and twenty-five ministers were present. The work of the Association was harmonious.

Brethren pray that the well begun work may continue and that the Free Will Baptist of the United States may become fully organized in one body body in his great work.

Very respectfully,

GEORGE W. BURRIS,
Corresponding Clerk.

On motion the following committees were appointed:

1. On Devotional Service.—R. H. Yerby, G. W. Hollis, together with the Deacons of this church.
2. Committee on Publication of Literature and Education.—Rev. A. J. Davis, J. M. Shirley and T. L. Walker.
3. Committee on Missions.—Rev. E. M. Stamps, G. W. Hollis and W. D. Wheeler.
4. Executive Committee.—J. R. Weaver, J. R. Kemamer and Jesse W. Pike.
5. On State of Denomination.—Rev. J. E. Hodgens, C. B. Searcy and Woods Springfield.
6. Committee on Sabbath Schools.—Rev. J. M. Spencer, Rev. W. J. McGee and C. E. Lowery.
7. Committee on Temperance.—J. M. Weaver, Rev. T. L. Walker and A. J. Davis.
8. Committee on Resolutions.—Rev. E. M. Stamps, J. M. Shirley and R. H. Yerby. Called for report of Committee on Devotional Services, viz.: Bro. A. J. Davis to conduct the prayer and praise service at 7 o'clock p. m., and C. B. Searcy to preach at 7 o'clock p. m.

On motion adjourned to meet at 2 o'clock p. m.

The Conference met according to adjournment. Prayer by Bro. J. M. Spencer. The Moderator then called for the several reports.

1. Called for report on Publication of Literature and Education. Report as follows:

We your Committee on Publication, etc., submit the following report:

Section 1. We recommend that we use the Literature published by our own denomination. We further recommend the establishing of a State Press in this our state at as early a date as possible.

Sec. 2. We find that the demand for an educated ministry is more needed now than ever before, and unless we do educate we will be a back number; and our young men starting out will not feel so embarrassed if they were educated, and we encourage our young men to strive harder for it than ever be-

fore, and that we as a body do all in our power to erect a college somewhere in the state to educate our young ministers, just as soon as possible.

3. Realizing the great danger in the study of the various publications in the world today, we therefore recommend that our people be very careful in selecting the literature read by our children; and we further recommend that we urge all our churches in the various Associations to subscribe for and read the Free Will Baptist, a paper printed at Ayden, North Carolina, and also use the Free Will Baptist literature in our Sunday schools.

On motion report adopted and committee discharged.

A. J. DAVIS, Chairman.

Called for report of Committee on Missions. Report as follows:

We recommend that this body appoint one or more State Evangelists, subject to the order of the Executive Committee; and we further recommend that each church in each of the various Associations set apart a day or two days in the month of January and May 1917, monthly or semi-monthly services for the express purpose of collecting money for the State Evangelistic work, and that all our Sunday schools one Sunday in each of these months mentioned donate to the same. One days donation for one in January and one in May, or it might be considered a State Mission fund. Let same be paid into the church treasury, subject to the order of the State Executive Committee, and that the pastors of the respective churches belonging to this State Conference keep these special days before his congregation. Report of committee adopted and committee discharged.

E. M. STAMPS, Chairman.

Called for report of Executive Committee. Report as follows:

We, your committee recommend that Woods Springfield be elected State Evangelist, with full power and authority, to act as such. And should he need any assistance, we further recommend that he call to his aid Bro. J. E. Hodgens and Bro. C. B. Searcy, and he, Bro. Springfield be clothed with the power of calling them to any field where he may think best and this call be also subject to the order of the Executive Committee. We also further recommend that these Evangelists make their reports to the next annual session of this conference, stating therein the number of miles traveled, the number sermons preached, amount of expenses, etc., and total amount received. We further recommend that each church affiliating with this Conference pay \$10.00 for current expenses and the same to be paid as soon as possible, in order that the clerk may have the minutes of this Conference printed. The same to be forwarded to C. B. Searcy, Treasurer, at Abbeville, Ala.

On motion report adopted and committee discharged.

J. R. WEAVER, Chairman.

Called for report of Committee on Temperance. Report as follows:

On motion that this Convention adopt the report of Committee on Temperance at the Kahaba Association in its last session, which read as follows:

Temperance should be an individual subject, and should appeal to all true followers of Christ, it is one of the fundamental principles in forming and shaping a true Christian character. It is the key to a successful life,

both in church and state. It is right in the sight of God to be temperate in all things. There are many ways by which intemperance is practiced, and we as professed Christians should carefully study the scriptures in reference to Temperance, that we may rightly understand the meaning of the word "Temperance." As it was said of John the great forerunner of Christ, that he should drink neither wine or strong drink, establishing the fact that if we would wield an influence for God, we must abstain from all intoxicating beverages, strong drink is a Christian educational question; and we as professed Christians should demonstrate to the world the worth and merit of the church of the living God in lifting humanity upon a higher plane of living. We condemn the legalizing law of the sale of intoxicating liquors.

On motion report adopted and committee discharged.

J. R. WEAVER, Chairman.

Called for report of committee on the State of the Ministry.

We, your committee submit the following: We recommend that this Conference adopt the following form of Certificate of standing, to be used by all our ministers. That we may be and have a uniform system of certificates which will guard and protect our churches from being imposed upon by imposters, even though our ministers may have already a credential or license, this being only to show that he is in good standing, and this certificate shall be his authority to preach the gospel anywhere in the bounds of this State Conference, or anywhere else. And that the clerk of each Association be and is required to furnish the clerk of this State Conference with a list of all ministers who are in good standing in their Association, at as early a date as possible, and upon reception of this notice the clerk of this Conference will send one of the certificates to each minister, whose name has been sent up. The Certificate to read as follows:

CERTIFICATE OF STANDING.

This is to certify that Bro. A's. character and Christian standing has been carefully investigated by a committee of his Association, and found to be in harmony with the Bible and the requirements of this Association.

It is therefore ordered that this certificate of standing be issued and that it is only for one year.

Done by order of State Conference in session, this November 23rd, 1916.

On motion report adopted and committee discharged.

On motion adjourned until 8 o'clock P. M. Saturday night.

On motion Conference met pursuant to adjournment. Prayer by Bro. R. F. Yerby. The Moderator then announced the House ready for business. Called for report of committee on Sunday Schools. Report as follows:

We submit the following report: Whereas, we realize the great necessity of a more and better system of Sunday schools. That we may be better acquainted with the Bible and not for the young only, but for the older people, and that the church is the only way by which we may get the best results; that our Sunday schools may be better equipped with literature and good music. And we recommend the organ wherever it can be had. We further recommend the hearty co-operation of the old and especially the young men and

women. For we cannot conceive of a more successful way to bring our children to Christ than through the medium of the Sunday school, for which let all strive to attend.

On motion report adopted and committee discharged.

REV. J. M. SPENCER, Chairman.

On motion by C. B. Searcy that the ministers in charge of the various churches belonging to this Conference appoint as soon as possible one agent in every church to take names of subscribers for the Free Will Baptist paper printed at Ayden, N. C., and send in names at once that our paper may get into the hands of our people, and others. Motion adopted.

Called for report of committee on the state of the Free Will Baptist denomination. Report as follows:

We, your committee submit the following: From the best information that we gather from the delegates and from the Denominational Press, our denomination is progressing fine. Several new church buildings are going up in spite of the hard times, but we, realizing that we have lost some by not organizing in the towns, and also lost by not organizing the State Conference earlier, but we are proud to say we have started out on a new line, and every one who sees or hears of our plan is ready to join us, the doctrine of Free Salvation, Free Communion and Immersion in water is the doctrine of the Bible. Therefore let us unite our efforts as one man and success is ours. So let each one of us here go to our respective places of abode with a full determination to win the victory, and may God bless and guide and direct, should be the ardent prayer of all.

Respectfully submitted,

J. E. HODGENS, Chairman.

On motion report adopted and committee discharged.

The Moderator then agreed to furnish the clerk of this Conference with a copy of the By-Laws of this the State Conference, which are as follows:

Article 1. Each session of the Alabama State Conference shall be called to order by the Moderator when present, or in his absence the Assistant Moderator or clerk.

Article 2. As each sitting or adjourned meeting shall be opened and closed by prayer.

Article 3. Ten members shall constitute a quorum, provided not less than three Associations are represented, but a smaller number may adjourn from time to time.

Article 4. After the opening of each session the Executive Committee will examine the credentials of the ministers present, and after report of this committee and the enrollment of the delegates and ministers present, the Conference shall proceed to the election of Moderator and Clerk.

5. At each session such standing committees may be appointed as the Conference may deem proper.

6. It shall be the duty of the clerk to furnish each session of the Conference with a book of records containing the proceedings of the previous session.

Article 7. Any one wishing to retire while the Conference is in session

shall obtain leave of the presiding officer, who shall make same known to the Conference, and if no objection, leave shall be granted.

Article 8. No person shall be allowed to speak more than 10 minutes at any one time, or more than twice on any one subject, without consent of the body.

Article 9. It shall be the duty of the Conference to elect or appoint a committee of three or more to be designated as a "General Home Mission Board" whose duty it shall be to inaugurate and execute a general system of domestic missions. They shall appoint such sub-committees and employ such agents and missionaries as they may deem proper. They shall hold office until their successors are duly elected or appointed, in case of death vacancies may be filled by appointment of the Moderator, and shall make a detailed report at each regular session of this body of their doings for the past year.

Article 10. All questions, queries and resolutions to be debated upon shall be presented in writing, and shall be read in open Conference, and a motion and second of a member of the body before debate.

CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE CONFERENCE

Article 1. The name of this Conference shall be The Alabama State Conference.

Article 2. The object of this Conference is to bring us as a denomination into a more intimate and fraternal relationship, and to effect thorough co-operation of the various bodies of the Liberal of Free Will Baptist in this State and elsewhere.

Article 3. This State Conference shall be composed of the representatives of Baptist bodies that harmonize generally with the doctrine and usages of the Associations now constituting this body, who may be admitted from time to time on their own application.

Article 4. The officers of this Conference shall be a Moderator, Assistant Moderator and a Clerk and Treasurer.

Article 5. The Moderator shall be elected at each regular session in such manner as the body may choose, and he shall perform duties usually performed by presiding officers, serving until his successor is elected. A state Clerk shall be elected from time to time and shall continue in office until his successor is elected.

Article 6. In the letters from the different bodies shall be expressed the number of churches composing each Association. Those in full fellowship, etc., those received and those dismissed since the last session of this Conference, and the time and place of holding their respective annual Associations, together with their statistical reports of their numerical strength.

Article 7. Each Association shall be entitled to three delegates elected by their body while in their annual session, all ordained ministers are entitled to membership in this body without being elected with certificate of good standing from the Association to which they belong.

Article 8. Any article in this constitution may be altered or amended by a majority of votes at any regular meeting and approved by that body,

and published in the minutes with notice that it will be voted upon at next meeting. Article 1 and 10 shall never be changed.

Article 9. Each session of the Conference shall determine the time and place of holding the next session.

Article 10. The Executive Committee of this Conference shall be members of the Free Will Baptist church in good standing, and shall have the power to contract with and sustain our Evangelists, who are elected by the body in regular session, they will take an oversight of the Association and ministers, who are members of this State Conference, will be known as a committee on credentials.

Called for report of Committee on Resolutions.

We, your committee submit the following report: Realizing the necessity of a more thorough organization,

Be it therefore Resolved, That we empower our Moderator, Woods Springfield to appoint a representative or correspond by letter, soliciting any and all Associations who do not already belong to this Conference to meet us in our next session, that they may co-operate with us in this great work.

Resolved further, that we tender our heartfelt thanks to the Almighty God for the opportunity of this Conference, for the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, also to this church for their kind and hospitable manner in caring for us during our stay with them.

On motion report adopted and committee discharged.

E. M. STAMPS, Chairman

On motion that this body adjourn to meet with Mt. Harmony church, Lamar county, Ala., on Thursday, before the fourth Sunday in November 1917.

On motion Clerk have 500 copies of minutes printed. This closes one of the most harmonious and prosperous sessions ever held.

WOODS SPRINGFIELD, Moderator.

C. B. SEARCY, Clerk.

Delegates will be met at Millport on Southern railroad. Delegates will be met at Suligent on Frisco railroad.