

**Minutes of the Annual
Bethel Conference
of North Carolina**



1832



**Transcribed for the
Free Will Baptist
Historical Collection
By Robert E. Picirilli**

Minutes of the Bethel Conference, 1832

Editorial Note: The brief additions in italics are from one of two excerpts from the minutes found in *The Morning Star* and in an article entitled "Elias Hutchins in North Carolina." If the latter, a footnote identifies.

The *Bethel Annual* Conference was held with the church at Louson Swamp, Lenoir county, N. C., *on the 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th days of Nov. 1832.*

Eld. Jesse Vause delivered the Introductory Sermon from 1. Thess. 3: 8: "*For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.*"

The Conference then organized by appointing Eld. Jesse Vause, Moderator, Eld. Lewis Hartsfield, Clerk, and Bro. John Patrick, assistant.

On motion Bros. Thomas Hood and Willis Murphrey were appointed a Committee of Finance to receive contributions, settle with the treasurer, and report to Conference.

On motion, the letters from the several churches were handed in and read.

On motion, the letters of our correspondent from the South Carolina Conference, handed in and read by Eld. J. Vause, was read and accepted.

On motion, Eld. J. Vause was appointed to write a letter of correspondence to the brethren in South Carolina, informing them of the proceedings of this Conference, etc.

By request, of the brethren last mentioned, Elders Robert Bond, Lewis Hartsfield and Howell Hearn, were appointed to visit their next annual Conference.

Agreed that we recommend the brethren of our connection to patronize the Morning Star, published by the Free Will Baptist in the North.

Agreed that Elder Jesse Heath ascertain for what number of subscribers a monthly paper in pamphlet form, including all the religious matter of the Morning Star, and other religious communications forwarded by this connection, can be published for one dollar per year. The motions made by Elder

Jesse Heath in the Shiloh Conference, and referred to the consideration of a joint committee of both Conferences were all lost in the Bethel Conference except the two following:

Agreed that deacons no longer have liberty to baptize or break bread.

Resolved that we employ two itinerant preachers; also that the Clerks open subscriptions in their respective churches for the purpose of obtaining money to support them: the sums thus voluntarily subscribed, to be paid quarterly, that is one fourth part every three months, to the clerk of the church, and that he pay those subscriptions quarterly to those itinerant preachers, and forward in the church's letter to the next Annual Conference, an account af the sums thus paid.

Resolved, that Elder R. McNab be one of the itinerant preachers one year, and that he receive one hundred dollars for his services.

Resolved, that Elder Lewis Hartsfield be the other for the same term, and that he receive one hundred and fifty dollars for his services.

On motion, Elders Jesse Heath and E. Hutchins were appointed to publish a history of our connection in this and the adjoining states.

On motion, Elder Jesse Heath was appointed to receive contributions for the expense af publishing said history.¹

*Voted, that ten dollars, out of the general fund, be given to Elder E. Hutchins.*²

A letter from Elder Jesse Lane, of. Indiana, was handed in, read and accepted.

Resolved, that the General Baptist Association in Indiana and Kentucky, of which Elder Lane is a member, have liberty to

¹ Here Harrison and Barfield insert a parenthetic note, "(This proved to be a failure as it was never prepared.)"

² This line is from "Elias Hutchins in North Carolina" (The Freewill Baptist Quarterly, vol. X [July 1862]), 307, where a lengthy excerpt from the minutes is cited.

represent itself in our next Annual Conference.

On motion, Elder Jesse Heath was appointed to continue his correspondence with Elder Lane.

Voted, that our next Conference be held at Gum Swamp church, Pitt county, commencing Thursday before the second Sunday in Nov. 1833, and that Elder Lewis Hartsfield preach the introductory sermon; on his failure Elder Jesse Vause.

Voted to adjourn to the time and place above mentioned.

Prayer by Elder Hutchins.

Lord's day, Nov. 12, Elder R. McNab introduced the services and preached on Mark 15:34. Elder E. Hutchins followed, from Deut. 32:1, 2; and, with gratitude to God, we can say that the close of this day's meeting was solemn and very interesting. The congregation was mostly in a flood of tears; saints rejoiced, sinners mourned and cried for mercy, while large numbers of people crowded around the stage and united in singing, and, in shaking the friendly parting hand.

Bro. Hutchins gave an invitation to mourners, and it was thought about fifty came forward, and desired the prayers of the people of God. As many were desirous, and the prospect very encouraging, another meeting was appointed for the next day. . . In the close of this meeting, [next day after a sermon by Hutchins,] a door was opened for the reception of members, when six happy converts came forward and were joyfully received.³

It was judged that there were 3500 people present on Lord's day.

From the letters of the several churches, it appeared that the aggregate number of members was 1585—and that during the year preceding 164 had been added by baptism, 29 dismissed, 13 excluded, 3 died—showing an increase of 119. The number of churches was 22, of preachers 27.⁴

³ These two paragraphs are from the excerpt from the minutes in "Elias Hutchins in North Carolina," referenced in an earlier note.

⁴ This statement was given in *The Morning Star*; probably based on a table of churches in the minutes and not contained in the minutes in this form.

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