

MINUTES

—OF THE—

SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL SESSION

—OF THE—

TEXAS FREE WILL BAPTIST
ASSOCIATION.

HELD WITH SPRING HILL CHURCH, GRIMES

COUNTY, OCT. 19 AND 20, 1894.

EAGLE PRINT, BRYAN, TEXAS.

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The seventeenth annual session of this association convened with Spring Hill church, Grimes county, Texas, October 19 and 20, 1894.

The introductory sermon was preached by Rev. Joseph Apperson, on Friday morning. The association organized Friday evening. Rev. Joseph Apperson, moderator; Rev. J. W. Orr, clerk, and Bro. J. F. Martin, assistant clerk.

Churches being called, the following responded through their duly authorized representatives:

Christian Home, by J. W. Henderson and J. W. Cloud; Bright Light, by M. G. Buchanan, J. W. Shaw and R. A. Clark;

Wellborn, by August B. McSwain and W. M. Parker; Spring Hill, by W. P. Franklin and J. H. Martin; Reform, by G. L. Roberson. Plain View, by T. A. Searcy and C. A. Griffin; Concord, by J. W. Orr; Tatum, by A. M. Stewart; Union Springs, by A. M. Stewart; Union Chapel, by A. M. Stewart; Friendship, by — Welch; New Prospect, by Joseph Apperson; Good Hope, by Joseph Apperson; High Prairie, by W. J. Loftis; Isabel's Chapel, —; Sharron, —; Union Arbor, —.

Two of the above—High Prairie and Wellborn—were organized during the year.

Letters were read from most of these churches, which letters indicate a fair degree of prosperity, both material and spiritual.

After appointing committees on pulpit supply, finances, temperance, obituaries, Sunday schools, the condition of the churches and state of the ministry, education and publication, the body was adjourned to meet at 9 o'clock Saturday morning. Rev. J. W. Kennedy preached at night to an appreciative audience.

Saturday morning the association met pursuant to adjournment. A report of

the temperance committee showed the following resolution:

"We recommend that this association urge the churches to discourage in every legitimate way the use of intoxicants as beverages, and that it require every minister of the association to preach by precept and example total abstinence from intoxicating liquors as beverages, and to insist on it as the true and scriptural idea of temperance." Adopted.

The committee on state of the churches and ministry report most of our ministers sustaining good moral characters, and well reported of by those that are without as well as by those within, but some seem to be remiss as to engaging in ministerial work of any kind. We recommend all the indulgence that can be properly exercised towards such, but would suggest that the churches to which these delinquent ministers belong stimulate and encourage them to do active and systematic ministerial work in any fields that may open, and if the fields do not open press them to open fields in which they may glorify the Master. We find one minister, brother J. P. Lunsford, out of harmony with our church, advocating usages not in keeping with the

teachings of our church. We are reliably informed that he has declared himself independent of our body, pronouncing us heterodox in doctrine and usages. We recommend that the name of this brother, J. P. Lunsford, be dropped from the list of ministers. We further recommend that this association urge the churches to be more careful in the matter of giving men license to preach; to license none to preach till he has proved himself, morally, intellectually, and spiritually qualified for the sacred office.

A. M. Stewart, Chmn.

The board to examine applicants for ordination to the ministry, which board constitutes an ordaining council, shall hold regular sessions once every year at the time and place of meeting of the association; but to be called in special session in cases of absolute necessity. The members of the board are, Joseph Apperson, W. T. Wood, M. R. C. David, A. M. Stewart, and J. P. Martin.

Obituary committee reported three deaths this year: Sister Nelson, of Panola county; Bro. Stobb, of Concord church, Brazos county; Bro. P. E. McCarty, of Concord church.

Committee on Sunday schools report two denominational Sunday schools and three union Sunday schools. The ministers of this association are urged to advocate the grand cause of Sunday schools and look well to the interest of the same. We also urge upon the part of the laity that they should be more zealous in the cause. We recommend that the pastors of our churches give to each church in their charge a lecture as often as they can.

Committee on Education and Publication.—We do not think that the members of Free Communion Baptists in this state will at present justify the publication of a paper in the state, and we recommend as mediums of communication, the Morning Star, the Messenger, published by the General Baptists, and the Harvest Gleaner, when it resumes publication. For our ministers, Butler and Dunn's Theology, which may be had of the Free Baptist Publishing House, Boston, Mass., should be found in every library. We think the churches should exert themselves for the education of the ministers that come from their ranks. We think our circulating library should

be looked after, the several volumes collected and a good librarian elected, and our ministers be required to use, if they have not, and connect several like reading. Our ministers should have a yearly course of reading prescribed by our board of examiners.

M. Stewart, Chairman.

Joseph Apperson was appointed librarian.

Finance committee reports \$3.25 in the treasury for the support of the missionary that was put in the field.

Missionary's report was called for, and upon report of Joseph Apperson, missionary, it was found that he had done three weeks' missionary work, for which he was to receive pay at the rate \$40 per month. Rev. W. T. Wood was elected missionary, and was promised \$40 per month for two months.

Mission board: J. F. Kuykendall, Mrs. Sunshine Buchanan, Mrs. M. L. Simpson, Mrs. E. E. Stewart, W. T. Wood, A. J. Baines, W. J. Loftis, and J. F. Martin.

Next session of this association will be held with Good Hope church, Rusk Co., to begin on Thursday night before the first Sunday in November. J. W. S. Ken-

nedy was appointed to preach the introductory sermon; F. M. Dover, alternate.
J. W. ORR, Clerk pro tem

Officers of this association: Joseph Apperson, Moderator; D. H. Duke, Clerk; J. F. Martin, Treasurer; A. M. Stewart, Corresponding Secretary.

A. M. Stewart, Beckville, Texas; J. J. Tipton, Beckville; W. J. Loftis, Lone Star; Charles H. Holmes, Macy; J. F. Scruggs, Willow Hole; M. R. C. David; J. P. Martin, Madisonville; J. W. Orr, Macy; Joseph Apperson, Lone Star; W. T. Wood, Harvey; F. M. Dover, Hollis; J. W. S. Kennedy.

Formula for writing letters from the churches to the association:

State of Texas—County of Grimes.

We, the members of the Free-Will Baptist Church at Spring Hill, to the Texas Association of the Free-Will Baptist in Christ, when convened with Good Hope church in Rusk county, State of Texas: We send our beloved brethren, to-wit: Bro., and Bro., to aid you in your Godly deliberation. Our statistics are as follows:

Day of meeting, Saturday before the... Sunday, and Sunday following.

Members received this year

Members restored this year

Members lettered.....
Members excluded.
Members deceased..
Total membership.....
Contributions

We pray the Association to receive our letter and delegates. We call for our pastor, Bro..... Finally, brethren, pray for us. Done by order of the church, this..... day of....., Moderator.
....., Clerk.



STATISTICAL TABLE.

CHURCHES.	COUNTY	STATE	PASTOR.	CLERK.	No. Mem- bers.
Bright Light....	Brazos...	Texas...	W. T. Wood...	E. J. Cole...	100
Christian Home...	Brazos...	Texas...	W. T. Wood...	C. L. Tobias...	70
Good Hope.....	Rusk.....	Texas...	M. R. O. David...	E. Jemerson...	50
Concord.....	Brazos...	Texas...	W. J. Loftis...	Wm. Carter...	46
Union Springs...	Rusk...	Texas...	A. M. Stewart...	A. M. Richardson	51
Friendship.....	Madison...	Texas...	W. J. Loftis...	W. G. Lee.....	30
Plain View.....	Madison...	Texas...	W. J. Loftis...	A. P. Baines...	80
Spring Hill.....	Grimes...	Texas...	W. J. Loftis...	— Franklin.....	135
Union Chapel...	Panola...	Texas...	A. M. Stewart...	D. H. Duke.....	53
New Prospect...	Cherokee...	Texas...	Joseph Apperson.	James McGee...	12
Tatum.....	Panola...	Texas...	A. M. Stewart...	J. J. Williamson...	7
High Prairie....	Madison...	Texas...	W. J. Loftis...	A. Sandle.....	30
Wellborn.....	Brazos...	Texas...	W. T. Wood...	— Roberson.....	23
Reform.....	Grimes...	Texas...	W. J. Loftis...		24
Isabel's Chapel..	Rusk....	Texas...			30
Sharon.....	Rusk....	Texas...			35
Union Arbor....	Panola...	Texas...			84
Old Prospect.....	Rusk.....	Texas...			27

ARTICLES OF FAITH.

OF GOD.—Article 1.—There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

OF FREE WILL.—Art. 2.—We believe the human will is free, and that all who heard and have learned of the Father have the ability to accept or reject the conditions of salvation.

OF BAPTISM.—Art. 3.—Mode.—And Jesus, when he was baptised, went up straightway out of the water.—Matt. iii.

And it came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth and was baptised of John in Jordan.—Mark i, 9v.

Buried with him in baptism, wherein ye are also risen with him through faith of the operation of God who hath raised him from the dead.—Col. ii, 12v.

We are buried with Him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his resurrection.—Romans vi, 4, 5 vs.

For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God.—Col. iii, 3v.

Subjects—Go ye therefore, and teach all nations.—Matt. xxviii, 19v.

Then they that gladly received his word were baptised.—Acts ii, 41v.

And they spake unto him the word of the Lord and to all that were in his house; and he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes; and was baptised, he and all his straightway. And when he had

brought them into his house he set meat before them and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.—Acts xvi, vs. 32, 33, 34.

If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest.—Acts viii, vs. 37, 38, 39.

Object.—The like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.—I Peter, 3:21.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.—Art. 4.—But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.—I Cor., xi, 28v.

Object.—This do in remembrance of me.—Luke xxii, 19v.

THE BIBLE.—Art. 5.—All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.—II Tim., iii, 16v.

CONSTITUTION.

Art. 1. This association shall be known as the Texas Free-Will Baptist Association.

Art. 2. It is not the object of this Association to usurp authority over the churches, but to recommend such measures as would promote unity of action among the churches; to harmonize the efforts of the individual churches with one another, by encouraging one another in their efforts to accomplish good and make each other more proficient in their undertaking for good.

Art. 3. This Association shall be composed of delegates from the churches who shall be selected and sent from the churches composing it, and each church shall be entitled to two

delegate, and for over fifty and not less than seventy-five members a church shall be entitled to one or more delegates.

Art. 4. Ordained ministers shall be entitled to seats in the Association as delegates; and for the first five years after the adoption of this constitution, licensed ministers may be admitted to seats as delegates.

Art. 5. New churches may be admitted into the Association upon recommendation.

Art. 6. The standing officers of this Association shall be, moderator, clerk, treasurer, and corresponding secretary.

Art. 7. This Association shall hold its sessions once every year, at a time and place specified by a preceding session.

Art. 8. This Constitution may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at any regular meeting.

CHURCH DECORUM.

1st. The church may choose a pastor annually, at the last regular conference in associational year, or if they prefer may choose a pastor for an indefinite length of time, to continue from year to year, so long as he may deem it proper to keep up the connection.

2nd. When it becomes necessary, a pastor may be chosen at any time; but if the choice be made at a special conference, the time must be appointed at a monthly meeting of the church.

3rd. The pastor shall be moderator of the church, but when he is absent, or does not sit as moderator, being present, some suitable brother shall be appointed to sit in his place.

4th. There shall be two or more deacons in the church, whose duty it shall be to superintend the collection and disbursement of all contributions made by the church for the pastor, etc., and to distribute the bread and wine in the administration of the Lord's Supper.

5th. Some suitable member shall be appointed clerk, and it shall be his duty to do the recording and other writing pertaining to the business of the church, and to preserve a file of the minutes of the Association.

6th. When a new clerk is appointed all the books, minutes, etc., belonging to the clerk, shall be immediately delivered to him by his predecessor.

7th. When the church deems it necessary, a committee of not less than three male members, well acquainted with business, shall be appointed whose business it shall be to give advice to brethren who apply to them relative to cases of dealing, etc., with the church.

8th. The church shall hold a two days meeting monthly, embracing Saturday and the Lord's day following, the first of which shall be the regular time of conference.

9th. It shall be the duty of every member, male and female, to attend each conference meeting, if they can, for on that day the pastor is expected to instruct the church in a special manner by giving plain and pointed lessons on doctrine, discipline, and the rules of holy living.

10th. Conferences shall be conducted as follows: 1. Prayer, unless divine service has just been concluded, and generally then. 2. Invite visiting brethren to a seat. 3. Open a

door for the reception of members. 4. Call for absentees. 5. For acknowledgments. 6. For references of deferred business. 7. For matters of dealing which are in order to come before the church. 8. For miscellaneous business.

11th. Visiting brethren, as also helps called in from sister churches, shall be allowed to speak and make motions or seconds, but not allowed to vote.

12th. An orderly member of the Baptist church, which does not hold this church in fellowship, may be received into the church without a letter, when it is made apparent that his christian character is unimpeachable and that he has applied for a letter and could not obtain it because he desired to join this or some sister church. All other persons must join by letter or baptism.

13th. No member shall be received without the unanimous consent of the members present; but unreasonable objections shall not be valid; and unless withdrawn, the member who makes them shall be liable to be taken under dealings by the church.

14th. When the moderator calls for absentees, the clerk shall inform the church what male members have been absent from three successive conferences; and the moderator shall appoint some brother or brethren to cite each of them to the next conference.

15th. No member shall be expelled unless he has been cited verbally or in writing, to attend at his trial, provided his residence is known to the church.

16th. When a witness, not a member of this church, is introduced, he shall not be exam-

ined until the question has been put to the church, "Will you hear the testimony of this witness?"

17th. The evidence in every case of dealing and acknowledgments shall be minuted on the church book.

18th. Members dismissed from this church, by letter, who become disorderly, or continue to hold their letters without a good reason, shall be cited to conference to answer for their conduct.

19th. Expelled members may be restored to fellowship on their petition, if their walk since expulsion has convinced the church that they have sincerely repented of their former evil conduct.

20th. A vote shall not be taken upon any question without a move and second, and in all important questions the vote shall be taken by rising to the feet.

21st. No motion shall be made while a move and second is before the conference.

22nd. It shall be considered disorderly for any member to absent himself from conference when an important question is to be decided; but a member upon his request, may be exempted, by the church, from voting on either side in peculiar cases.

23rd. No member shall leave the house during conference without sufficient cause, nor engage in conversation or whispering, without being subject to be called to order by the moderator.

24th. All discussions in conference must be conducted with calmness and good feeling; those who speak must arise to their feet and

address the moderator, and keep to the point in debate.

25th. No one shall speak more than three times on the same motion without permission from the moderator, nor shall the remarks of any one be unreasonably long.

26th. When the moderator speaks in debate he nominates some brother moderator in his stead.

27th. No one shall be interrupted while speaking, unless it is necessary to call him to order.

28th. It shall be the rule of the church to attend to the administration of the Lord's Supper at least four times a year, and the expenses are to be paid by the church.

29th. Feet washing shall be attended to as the church sees proper.

30th. The Decorum may be altered or amended by the vote of two-thirds of the members present at any two successive monthly conferences.

GOVERNMENT AND ORDINANCES.

1st. We believe that a gospel church, or a church of Christ, is a congregation of Christians, constituted and governed according to the rules laid down in the New Testament.

2nd. That these rules require churches to preserve the form of government and the ordinances of the first Christian churches, and to be composed of baptised believers in Christ.

3rd. That the establishment of a central or a catholic government over the visible church, or any part thereof, is a device of earthly au-

biton, repugnant to the word of God, subversive of the churches; and dangerous to the liberties of men.

4th. That gospel churches are the only ecclesiastical bodies or tribunals authorized by the scriptures; that each church has the unrestricted right to administer its own government, without suspension or interference, being under Christ, essentially independent and absolute; and that if this right be surrendered to superintending jurisdiction, by delegation or otherwise, the assembly then ceases to be a gospel church.

5th. That the authority of churches is designed for the perpetuation of the true religion of the gospel, and for the preservation of a pure and orderly body of Christians on earth; that it is fully sufficient for the purposes intended, but that it does not extend to the persons, property or consciences of men in any case whatever.

6th. That the only requisites to church membership are faith in Christ and obedience to the gospel; that faith in Christ necessarily exists in connection with the belief in the fundamental truths of Christianity, and that to prescribe any other requisite of church membership is an assumption of authority on the part of the church, and a departure from the plan of the gospel.

7th. That the officers of a church are Elders and Deacons; that Elders are also called bishops or pastors; that all Elders are equal in rank, though they may perform different functions, since some may be bishops or pastors of particular churches, while others may be simply Elders, having no pastoral charge.

8th. That the authority of the minister of the gospel extends to teaching, exhortation, and rebuke, but no further; that he cannot perform any act which belongs to the authority of the church, such as reception of members into the church compact, or the expulsion of offenders; that as a member of the church he is no more than any other member, and if he is guilty of transgression, he is to be brought to trial before his brethren, and convicted or acquitted in the same manner as if he were a private person; yet we think it prudent and proper to call in advisory helps, especially if the minister is to be tried upon charge of heresy.

9th. That Elders and Deacons may be set apart to their office by ordination, or the imposition of the hands of the Presbytery, and prayer.

