

MINUTES

OF THE

54th Annual Session

OF THE

**VERNON FREE-WILL BAPTIST
ASSOCIATION**

HELD WITH

FAIRVIEW CHURCH

October 20, 21 and 22

1934

OFFICERS

REV. J. W. PORTER, Moderator

A. J. SANDERS, Clerk

The next session of this Association will meet with Pearce's
Chapel Church, on Saturday before the third
Sunday in October, 1935

PROCEEDINGS

The 54th annual session of the Vernon Free Will Baptist Association convened with Fairview church Oct. 20, 21, 22, 1934.

At 11 o'clock A. M. Saturday Oct. 20th, 1934 the introductory sermon was preached by Rev. J. W. Porter to a large crowd of ministers, delegates, together with the membership of Fairview church, after which one hour was given for refreshments.

AFTERNOON SESSION

The Association was called to order by the Moderator, after which a few songs was sung and prayer was offered by R. N. Yerby.

The Moderator took the chair and announced the Association ready for business, after which he appointed Bros. J. M. Graham and A. J. Sanders reading clerks. Letters were then turned in from the various churches composing the Association, which were read and the names of Moderator and delegates enrolled as per statistical table.

On motion properly sustained by a second and carried by the Association an election was held for the purpose of electing officers. Rev. J. W. Porter was elected Moderator and Bro. A. J. Sanders Clerk. The Moderator and Clerk came forward and assumed their duties. After a few remarks by the Moderator the Association proceeded with the business by inviting Ministers and corresponding delegates to seat with the Association, to aid and assist in council. The following Bros. came forward, from Jasper Association, Rev. M. L. Hollis, Rev. W. D. Martin, Rev. J. H. Potts and Rev. J. S. Fredrick. From Water Valley Association, Rev. G. C. Lee, Rev. J. H. Norwood and Rev. Dave Smithson. From State Line Association, Rev. F. R. Glenn and Rev. C. R. Puckett.

The Moderator appointed on program committee the following brethren to-wit: Thomas Hankins, D. C. Hall, J. M. Graham and J. E. Smith together with the Deacons of Fairview church.

On documents and order of business, Rev. S. F. Lee, Rev. E. A. Palmer, Rev. J. M. Hass, Bros. Sam Webster and C. S. Collins together with the Moderator and Clerk of the Association.

On committee on finance. Bros. B. C. Guin, G. B. Hill, G. A. Weaver, Cecil Stephens and Miss Gladys Baxter.

On committee on Sunday Schools, Rev. J. L. Lavender, Bros. H. A. Roberts, L. E. Duncan, J. R. Kinard, H. J. Rye, Miss Ruby Rye and J. L. Stembridge.

On Credential Committee, Bros. A. A. Prater, J. C. Brassfield, D. F. Harrison, J. A. Weir, E. W. Perkins, C. Q. Finch and L. J. Pickel.

On Deceased Members, Bros. S. J. Webster, S. L. Cash, J. M. Hill, Earl Elexander, M. C. Lockhart, L. A. Markham, and Mrs. Beartice Lee.

On Committee on Literature, Bros. W. J. Hill, G. W. Chaffin, W. W. Barnes, Emmette Lee and Mrs. Mike Vail.

On Committee on Querries and Resolutions. Bros. Arlander Shelnut, D. A. Markham, D. W. Dill, G. C. Lawrence, Kirby Jarden, J. R. Williams, Ulma Johnson and Phillip Woods.

The program committee announced its readiness to report, which report was as follows: We your committee on program wish to make the following report. We recommend that Rev. J. M. Hass preach at 7:30 P. M., Rev. Joe S. Fredrick at 9 o'clock Sunday morning, Rev. Geo. C.

Lee at 11 o'clock A. M., Rev. J. L. Lavender at 2 o'clock P. M. followed by Rev. J. H. Norwood, Rev. W. D. Martin at 7 o'clock P. M. and Rev. M. L. Hollis at the closing of the Association Monday afternoon.

Respectfully submitted,

Thos. Hankins, Chairman.

Rev. Geo. C. Lee rose to his feet, stating that it would be impossible for him to preach at 11 o'clock Sunday, as he was going to have to fill an appointment at one of the churches that he was pastoring, therefore the committee on program rearranged the program so that Rev. Geo. C. Lee preach at 7:30 o'clock P. M. and Rev. Dave Smitherman to preach at 11 o'clock Sunday.

On motion and second carried by the body the business session of the Association was adjourned until Monday morning at 8 o'clock, at which time it would reconvene for the purpose of completing the business.

NIGHT SERVICE

At 7:30 P. M. Rev. Geo. C. Lee preached to a large crowd, using as a text the 10th verse of the first chapter of First Peter.

SUNDAY SERVICES

Services begin by singing, directed by Brcs. Clifton Guin, Harrison Gosey and Garvin Chaffin, after which prayer was offered by Rev. E. A. Palmer.

At 9 o'clock Rev. Joe S. Fredrick occupied the stand, reading as his scripture lesson the third chapter of Second Peter, beginning with the 9th verse, using as a text the 18th verse of the same scripture, he preached to a large audience.

At 11 o'clock Rev. Dave Smitherman occupied the stand and preached to a large crowd, reading scripture from the 17th to the 32nd verse of the 11th chapter of First Cor., using as his subject "Upper Room." Rev. Smitherman was followed by Rev. J. W. Porter, after which the communion or Lords supper was taken, all Christians being invited to partake of same.

The congregation was dismissed for one hour for refreshments, which was served bountifully.

At 2 o'clock P. M. the congregation was assembled by singing. Rev. J. L. Lavender occupied the stand and after reading the 55th chapter of Isaih, preached to a large audience, using as his text, the first verse of the same chapter read. Rev. Lavender was followed by Rev. J. H. Norwood of the Water Valley Association.

MONDAY SESSION

At 9 o'clock A. M. devotional services were conducted by the Moderator.

After a roll call by the clerk, there being a chorum present the Moderator announced the Association ready for business.

On motion and second, carried by the body, the reading of the minutes of Saturdays session was omitted.

Friendship church having requested by letter and delegates, that the Association ordain Rev. J. L. Lavender to preach the Gospel, the Moderator appointed as Presbytery, Rev. M. L. Hollis, Rev. J. M. Hass and Rev. Joe S. Fredrick, for the purpose of ordaining Rev. J. L. Lavender.

The Moderator announced that the Association was ready for the reports of the various committees, which reports were presented as follows: We your committee on Documents and Order of Business, wish to make the following report. 1st. We recommend that the order of business as adopted by this Association. 2nd. We recommend that the place for the convening of the next session of the Association be decided on by the delegated body present. 3rd. We recommend that the clerk superintend the printing of the minutes, having the work done where he can get it done cheapest, considering grade of work. That the clerk have 500 copies printed and that he distribute them to the various churches of the Association on basis of funds paid by each church, being allowed \$5.00 for his services. 4th. We recommend that this Association send delegates to the State Conference. 5th. We recommend that Rev. J. L. Lavender be ordained to preach the Gospel, by the Association as requested by his church. We further recommend that Rev. J. L. Lavender preach the introductory sermon at the next session of the Association. 6th. We recommend that article one of the Association be amended so as to read, the Association will be composed of the Ministers, Deacons and Delegates of the various churches forming the same. all having full power to vote on all questions coming before the Association.

Report of the committee received and committee discharged, after which the report was reread by sections and adopted as read.

On motion sustained by a second and carried by the Association the Moderator was empowered to appoint three delegates to represent the Association at the State Conference. Bros. A. J. Sanders, J. M. Graham and S. L. Cash.

On motion sustained by a second and carried by the body, the Association determined by ballot where the Association would be held next year, which ballot resulted in a tie between Mt. Willing and Pearces Chapel churches. On the second ballot the Association was carried to Pearces Chapel church.

On motion sustained by a second and carried by the Association that a collection be taken for minute funds to be sent to the State Conference to help defray the expenses of printing the minutes of the State Conference. \$4.50 was collected and turned over to the clerk.

Report of Committee on Sabbath Schools

We your committee on Sabbath Schools wish to submit the following report. 1st. We find that some of our churches do not have Sabbath Schools and we insist upon each to support a Sabbath School. 2nd. We recommend the use of our own denominational literature with the Bible.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. J. L. Lavender, Chairman.

On motion sustained by a second the report was accepted, the committee discharged and adopted as read.

Report on Deceased Members

We your committee on deceased members wish to submit the following report. 1st. We find that since the last session of our Association that God has called by death from among us the following Brothers and Sisters to wit; from Mt. Harmony church, Bro. Thomas Wheeler

and Sister Ruth Johnson, from Piney Grove church, Bro. J. W. Markham, from Mt. Willing church, Bro. Henry Shelnut, from Siloam church, Sister Margaret Palmer, age 74 years, from Friendship church, Bro. Andy Green, from Union Chapel church, Bro. A. J. Robertson, from Beech Springs, Bro. John Stafford, from Centerpoint, Sister Nancy Pickle.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Cash, Chairman.

A song was sung and prayer was offered by Rev. M. L. Hollis in memory of our deceased Brothers and Sister.

On motion sustained by a second and carried by the body, the Moderator ordered the Association adjourned one hour for lunch.

MONDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

At 2 o'clock P. M. the people assembled in the church by singing directed by Bro. J. M. Graham, after which the Moderator announced the Association ready for business, and called for the report of the different committees which had not already reported. The committee on Literature handed in the following report. We your committee on Literature wish to submit the following report. 1st. The Free Will Baptist first of all stands for the study of the Bible as a way bill from earth to Heaven and since our people are going to read literature other than the Bible, we recommend that we use the Free Will Baptist literature as much as possible. 2nd. We recommend the Free Will Baptist paper to all who read a church paper.

Respectfully submitted,

W. J. Hill, Chairman.

On motion sustained by a second the report was accepted, committee discharged and adopted by the body as read,

Report on Credential Committee

We your committee on Ministerial Credential wish to submit the following report. 1st. We find all of our Ministers in good standing with their respective churches and sound in faith. 2nd. We recommend that all of our Ministers use all of their power and influence toward the building up of our beloved Association and, that they refrain from visiting or taking part in any Association or body that tends to gender strife or confusion among our Free Will Baptist people.

Respectfully submitted,

A. A. Prater, Chairman.

On motion sustained by a second and carried by the body, the report was received and the committee discharged.

There was a motion sustained by a second to adopt the report as read, which brought on some discussions and protest against Par. two of the report. Some contending that one clause of the report was requesting too much of our Ministers in asking them not to visit or take part in any Association tending to gender strife or confusion and, that same was directed at one particular Association, when an other Association of the same faith and order had got some of their members seated with us at this session to aid us in counsel. After a lengthy discussion the report was adopted by the Association as read.

We your committee on queries and resolutions wish to submit the

following report . 1st. We your committee find no queries to be discussed at this time. 2nd. Be it resolved that we the Vernon Free Will Baptist Association in session with Fairview church and community tender our thanks for kindness shown us during our stay among them.

Respectfully submitted,
Arlander Shelnut, Chairman.

On motion sustained by a second the report was received, committee discharged and, report adopted as read.

It being discovered that no committee had been appointed on Temperance, the Moderator appointed on that committee Bros. W. J. Hill, G. A. Weir and J. M. Graham, requesting the committee to get together and render a report as soon as possible.

On motion sustained by a second and carried by the body the Moderator was empowered to appoint corresponding delegates to the different Associations as follows: To Water Valley Association, Rev. J. M. Hass, Rev. J. L. Lavender and Bro. L. E. Duncan. To Jasper Association, Rev. S. F. Lee, Bros. J. E. Chaffin and J. T. Taylor. To Mt. Mariah Association, Bros. S. L. Cash, A. A. Prater, and R. T. Mixon. To State Line Association, Rev. E. A. Palmer, Bros. D. W. Dill and H. J. Rye.

Report on Committee on Finance

We your committee on Finance wish to submit the following report. After calling for minute funds from the several churches, we find that we have collected the sum of \$27.20.

Respectfully submitted,
B. C. Guin, Chairman.

On motion sustained by a second and carried by the body, the report was accepted, committee discharged and the money ordered turned over to the clerk.

Report of Committee on Temperance

We your committee on temperance wish to submit our report. We find there is not much progress being made in the fight for temperance 2nd. We recommend that a determined fight be made to stamp out the rum forces. It behooves us as Christian workers to renew our efforts in this great cause and, we admonish every pastor, delegate and church worker to be united in the cause of temperance.

Respectfully submitted,
W. J. Hill, Chairman.

On motion and second, carried by the body, the report was accepted, committee discharged and, adopted as read.

On motion sustained by a second and carried by the Association the Presbytery, consisting of Rev. M. L. Hollis, Rev. J. M. Hass and Rev. Joe S. Fredrick, ordained Rev. J. L. Lavender to preach the Gospel.

Following the ordination of Rev. Lavender, Rev. M. L. Hollis occupied the stand and preached to large audience, using as a text, the fifth verse of the fourth chapter of First Timothy.

At the close of Rev. Hollis' sermon, the Association having completed all of the business, on motion sustained by a second and carried the Association was adjourned to convene with Pearces Chapel church on Saturday before the third Sunday in October, 1935.

CONSTITUTION

1. This Association shall be known as the Vernon Free Will Baptist Association of Alabama, being composed of ministers, deacons and delegates from the different churches forming the same. All having full power to vote on all questions which come before the Association. Each church being entitled to three elected delegates in addition to the ministers and deacons.

2. This body shall be considered an advisory council, but having no authority over the internal affairs of the churches unless they depart from the articles of faith of this Association. This Association shall have authority over all ministers in the matter of doctrine, character, etc. In case any minister in this Association depart from and teach doctrine not in keeping with the articles of faith of this Association, the same shall be dealt with by this Association as it may see proper, according to the teachings of the Bible.

3. Each church of this Association shall be considered an advisory body and shall control its own internal affairs in matters of discipline etc., though any brothers feel impressed to preach the Gospel, the church shall or may recommend such brothers to all the Association and on examination of the brothers qualifications, if in the judgement of this body, the brother would be useful, they shall confer ordination, same being done at the Association by a legal presbytery.

4. All questions of doctrine and general interest shall be settled by a majority vote of the Association and the decision shall be settled

5. The officers of the Association shall be a Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer, who shall be chosen at each session by a majority vote.

6. The Association shall meet annually at such time and place as may be agreed upon by the previous annual session and shall adjourn finally until all business matters are transacted.

7. Churches wishing to become members of this Association must adopt its articles of faith and conform to its usages.

8. We agree as churches of this Association to use our best influence to promote the interest of all moral and benevolent institutions, such as temperance cause, Sabbath schools, Missionary work, etc.

9. No member of this Association shall be eligible of Moderator more than two consecutive sessions unless no other member be competent to act in that capacity.

10. Any member of this Association who shall be guilty of circulating reports of any nature or aiding in the circulating of any report that is untrue on a brother minister that is calculated to injure his moral reputation and religious influence, the same shall be dealt with by this Association. Any minister of this Association who is known to be guilty of using intoxicated spirits by drinking as a beverage, which is calculated to destroy his influence and usefulness, the same shall be dealt with by this Association as it may deem proper according to the teachings of the Bible.

11. The Association shall in all cases in the transaction of all business brought before it, be governed by a majority of the members or delegates present, and any church or delegates failing or refusing to do so is and shall be considered by the Association as being out of

order. Each member is to be a party to the enforcement of the same.

ARTICLES OF FAITH

Art. 1. We believe there is one true and living God who is the ruler of Heaven and earth, self-existent Creator of all things, revealed under the personal distinction of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, equal in every divine perfection and existing in distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

Art. 2. We believe the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is a treasure of Heavenly instructions; that it has God for its author, truth for its matter and salvation for its end; that it reveals principles upon which God will judge us and therefore is and shall remain to the end of the world the Center of Christians union, the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions will be tried.

Art. 3. We believe that man was created holy, under the law of his Maker, but from voluntary transgressions, fell from that holy state; in consequence of which all mankind is now deprived and holy unable of his own free will and ability to recover from the fallen state which he is in by nature.

Art. 4. We believe that God has not fixed the future state of mankind by an absolute and unconditional decree, but salvation is offered in the gospel free to all and, if sinners are lost forever, it will be their own fault.

Art. 5. We believe that Christ by his death and suffering made an atonement for the sins of mankind in general and every individual in particular who believes in Him can partake of the divine benefit.

Art. 6. We believe that true faith cannot proceed from the exercise of our natural faculties and powers, or form the force and operation of our free will, since man, in consequence of his natural corruption, is incapable of thinking or doing anything spiritually good.

Art. 7. We believe in the general application of the grace of God to fallen man sufficiently to enable him, morally and actually to obey the requirements of the law of liberty, Jas. 1-5, this the Act-saving faith, John 1-9; however none but those who believe or acquiesce in Christ will be saved thereby, Acts. 17-32, Rom. 2-19, John 3-9.

Art. 8. We believe in the free moral agency of man, by the grace of God, before and after conversion; that he is under no invincible necessity by his creator to act in any given way; that, if he lives after the flesh he shall die, but if he, through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, he shall live, and therefore man is always a proper subject of admonition and exhortation. Heb. 11:12-13. Rom. 13:14, Mark 13:12. Ezek. 18:24, Rev. 2nd and 8th chapters, Ezek. 33:13-28. 1st. Tim. 4:1, Heb. 3:5, Cor. 1:12-24, 1st. Peter 1-10.

Art. 9. We believe the visible church of Christ is a congregation of believers, associated by covenant in the fellowship of the gospel observing the ordinance of Christ, governed by His law and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His word; that its only proper officers or bishops, are pastors and deacons whose qualifications and duties are defined in the epistle to Tim. and Titus.

Art. 10. We believe that Christian baptism is immersion in water in the name of Father Son and Holy Ghost, and that believers are the proper subjects.

Art. 11. We believe the Lords supper is of perpetual obligation by which the members of the church are to commerate together, in the form of bread and wine, the dying love of Christ; preceeded always by solemn self-examination.

Art. 12. We believe in open and free communion. And the churches of our body are authorized, through their pastors, to invite all Christians of orthodox churches, who are in good standing in their respective churches to commune with us at the Lords table.

Art. 13. We believe in the resurrection of the dead and the general judgement; that the joys of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked will be eternal, upon the principles of grace and justice

Art. 14. Concerning the washing of the Saints feet as a gospel ordinance, each member shall have the right to participate in such ordinance as he can best answer his own conscience to God, without criticism on the part of any one.

RULES OF DECORUM

1. The Association shall be called to order by the Moderator who presided at the last session and the former clerk shall act until the body is fully organized.

2. The Association shall be opened and closed with singing and prayer.

3. The Moderator and Clerk shall be chosen by ballot at each session of the Association, by a majority of votes of the delegates present.

4. The names of delegates from the different churches shall be enrolled and called as often as is necessary during the session.

5. A majority of the delegates shall rule in all cases, except in the reception of churches, then it shall unanimous.

6. The Moderator shall not be entitled to vote, except in case of a tie and then he shall cast the deciding vote. He shall be entitled to speak on any question, after others have spoken, provided he appoints some one to the chair while he is speaking.

7. Only one person shall speak at a time and he shall rise to his feet and address the Moderator and, after recognition by the Moderator, proceed.

8. No brother shall be interrupted while speaking, unless he depart from the subject under discussion or use words of personal reflection.

9. No person will be allowed to speak more than twice on the same subject without the authority of the Association, more than fifteen minutes at a time.

10. No member shall laugh or talk during discussions.

11. No member shall absent himself from the Association without permission of the Moderator.

STATISTICAL TABLE

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