

MINUTES
OF THE
TWENTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL SESSION
OF THE
WATER VALLEY FREE-WILL
BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

CONVENED WITH
STETSON CHAPEL CHURCH
Thursday Night, Friday and Saturday
September 10-11-12, 1925



Next Session

WITH ANTIOCH CHURCH, TWO MILES SOUTH OF TOCCOPO-
LA, PONTOTOC COUNTY, MISS.—REV. DAVE SMITH-
ERMAN WILL PREACH THE IN-
TRODUCTORY SERMON

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Of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Session of the Water Valley Free-Will Baptist Association

FIRST DAY—NIGHT SESSION

The twenty-Seventh Annual Session of the Water Valley Free-Will Baptist Association convened with Stetson Chapel Church, six miles North of Sarepta, in Lafayette County, Miss., Thursday night, before the second Sunday in September, 1925. Rev. W. H. Fondren preached on Brotherly Love. Adjourned to meet Friday morning at 9 o'clock.

Delegates were assigned homes.

SECOND DAY—MORNING SESSION

Met by singing and reading and prayer, by Eld. J. H. Norwood. Lesson from Rom. 12th chapter. Moderator called for church letters from different churches, and the following letters were received and read, and delegates seated: Stetson Chapel, Springdale, New Life, Gauley, Bethlehem, Antioch and Pleasant Grove.

After seating delegates, a hymn was sung and the hand of fellowship was taken in love.

It was moved that we elect officers for this session of the Association, and the following officers were elected: Eld. J. H. Norwood, Moderator; Rev. Geo. C. Lee, Clerk; W. F. Bevill, Treas.

The following paid Minute funds: New Life, \$6.00; Gauley, \$6.00; Bethlehem, \$10.00; Antioch, \$4.60; Springdale, \$4.00; Stetson Chapel, \$3.90; Pleasant Grove, \$2.90—Total, \$37.40.

The Moderator appointed the following committees:

Associational Committee—J. F. Parker, T. F. McCord, Jess Morphis, Hoy Furgerson, J. P. Hamilton, Dave Long, Jim Thomas.

Preaching—Jim Frizzill, Bud Coleman, Tom Stewart.

Denominational Literature—B. O. Tallent, Emsey White, John Benjiman.

Education—Revs. Dave Smitherman, G. W. Kennedy and

W. H. Fondren.

Sabbath School—Gibb Starnes, Bill Corder, C. L. Long.

Obituary—Rev. Geo. C. Lee, Jim Corder, B. E. Sugg.

Report of Preaching Committee—We, your committee, report the following preaching services: Eld. J. H. Norwood will preach at 11:00 a. m., on "Communion," followed by Rev. G. W. Kennedy. Rev. Geo. C. Lee at 8:00 p. m., subject, "Feet Washing," followed by Rev. Dave Smitherman. Rev. G. W. Kennedy Saturday at 11 o'clock a. m., followed by Rev. W. H. Fondren and Rev. Dave Smitherman, Saturday night at 8 o'clock.

Jim Frizzill, Bud Coleman, Tom Stewart.

Adjourned for preaching. Eld. Norwood filled the stand and preached on "Communion."

SECOND DAY—EVENING SESSION

Met by reading and prayer, by Rev. Fondren and Rev. Smitherman.

The Association carried a move to ordain Bro. Jim Corder to Deacon's office of New Life Church and Bro. B. O. Tallent to Deacon of Stetson Chapel. The Moderator appointed the following council: Rev. Lee, Rev. Fondren and Rev. Smitherman.

Motion and second and carried that the Government of the Church and Covenant be published in Minutes of the Association.

Preachers' Reports

The preachers' reports were received and adopted.

Rev. W. H. Fondren reported to the Association: "I have preached 45 sermons, had 42 professions, received 31 into the church, baptized 19, preached 3 funerals, married 3 couples, traveled 289 miles, received on expense \$20.75; I have pastored one church; have two for next year." Toccopola, Miss.

Eld. J. H. Norwood reported to the Association: "Dear Brethren: "I have preached 56 sermons, preached 3 funerals, had 32 conversions, 31 additions to the church, baptized 6, traveled 302 miles, married 2 couples; I have the pastoral care of one church, Pleasant Grove; also for next year. May God bless this Association. Your brother, in love." Toccopola, Miss.

Rev. Geo. C. Lee's report for 1924-25, to the Association—

"I have preached 113 sermons, ordained one deacon, preached 6 funerals, married 3 couples, received into the church, 64, baptized 46, had 83 professions, received on expense, \$406.98; paid out \$81.76, leaving a balance above expense, of \$325.22; traveled 2514 miles. My address is Calhoun City, Miss."

Rev. D. M. Smitherman reports to the Association: "I have preached 15 sermons, organized one Sabbath School, married 3 couples, helped in 4 meetings, in which were 73 conversions and 61 additions to church; traveled 382 miles, collected on expense, \$15.50; paid out \$4.08—above expense, \$11.42. My work has been a pleasure. May God Bless this Association. My Address is Calhoun City, Mississippi."

Rev. G. W. Kennedy reports: "I have preached 5 sermons since I came into the Free-Will Baptist Association in August; received \$4.35, traveled 36 miles, paid out 75c. I am delighted to know of the Truth of the Doctrine of the Free-Will Baptists, which I take to be the Doctrine of the Bible. My address is Pontotoc, Miss., R. 1."

Committee Reports

Report of Sabbath School Committee—We, your committee on Sabbath Schools, report but three Sabbath Schools for which we are sorry. They are: Bethlehem, Gauley and Pleasant Grove. We urge each church to maintain a Sabbath School, and recommend the use of Union literature.

W. J. Corder, C. L. Long, G. C. Starnes.

Denominational Literature Report—We, the committee, recommend that the churches of this Association use the New Testament scripture as a study, as it contains our infallable rule of faith and practice. And recommend the use in the churches and homes, of Free-Will Baptist publications, as well as Union Sunday School Literature; and to practice in the future our profession as to prayer, devotional and social worship; self-denial and good works. "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ."

B. O. Tallant, J. E. White, John Bennett.

The Moderator read the Articles of Faith and the Constitution of this Denomination.

Report of Associational Committee—We, your committee, do not endorse the debating of any subject that was passed at the last Association. We find all the churches in good standing and in fellowship. We ask that the church practice the Communion and Feet Washing at least twice each year, and more often if they desire. We ask that Bro. G. W. Kennedy be ordained to the full work of the ministry this afternoon.

As we pay ten cents per member, from each church, as minute money, we ask that the Clerk of the Association be paid \$1.00 per church, for preparing the Minutes for the press, and if there be any more, that it be paid back into the treasurer; and the churches see that they collect and send to Association enough money to pay for the Minutes and pay the clerk's fee of \$1.00, each church. We recommend that the treasurer of each church make a report to each annual session of the Association—the receipt, disbursements, and balance, and who paid and to whom paid.

We ask the Association to bear with Bro. H. B. Rogers another year, and ask that he comply with the ruling of the Association to preach at least 12 sermons a year. Final report.

Signed: Jim Thomas, J. H. Morphis, J. P. Hamilton, R. W. Hill, J. F. Parker, D. H. Furgerson, Elwood Daniels, Dave Long, T. F. McCord.

Adjourned to meet Saturday at 9:00 a. m., Preaching at 8:00 o'clock by Rev. Lee—subject, "Obedience and Feet Washing," after which there were some forty-one more who came to the Communion table and washed feet with much love and affection for each other.

THIRD DAY—MORNING SESSION

Met by reading and prayer by Rev. Kennedy and Rev. Norwood.

Report of Obituary Committee—We, your committee, make our report. We find that our Association has lost eight of her members in the persons of Bro. J. H. Inmon, of Stetson Chapel; Sister Ritter Fondren, of Gauley; Bro. Frank Tallent, of Bethlehem; 3 from Antioch—Sister Essie Britt, Bro. Marshall Britt and Sister Mollie Stewart; Sister Rhoda Purvis, of New Life. They all died in the Faith. "Blessed are the dead, which die in the Lord, from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, they shall rest from their labor and their works do follow them." Also Bro. H. A.

Starnes, of Springdale.

Rev. Geo. C. Lee, Jim Corder, B. E. Sugg.

Report of Finance Committee—We, your committee, find the money question agitated more in our churches than usual. We find money in most of the church treasuries. Cash in hand for minute fund, \$37.40; cash in different church treasuries, \$55.80; improved church property: Gauley, \$250.00; Pleasant Grove, \$500.00; Bethlehem, \$1,000.00 (new buildings). Springdale plans to build a new house. We find the churches have awakened to pastoral support. The following churches have paid to pastors: Bethlehem, \$168.00; Gauley, \$57.55; Antioch, \$69.00; Stetson Chapel, \$56.11; New Life, \$84.82; others, \$40.60—total, \$476.08. We are glad to make this showing in the above report.

J. W. Sims, Dolk Starnes, J. R. Cantrell.

The next session of this Association will convene with Antioch church, 2 miles South of Toccopola, Miss., 1926.

Preaching by Rev. G. W. Kennedy, from Matt: 25th, 1-14, followed by Rev. W. H. Fondren. Adjourned for dinner.

THIRD DAY—EVENING SESSION

Met by reading and prayer, by Rev. Smitherman. Lesson read, 1 Cor. 12th chapter; prayer by Rev. Kennedy. The Moderator, as Chairman, with the assistance of Rev. Lee, Rev. Fondren and Rev. Smitherman, ordained Bro. Jim Corder and Bro. B. O. Talant, as Deacons of New Life and Stetson Chapel; also ordained Rev. G. W. Kennedy to the full work of the Ministry, by prayer and the laying on of hands.

It was moved and passed that the names of Rev. W. H. Tolloson and Rev. John Hill be omitted from the list of active preachers, and they be reported as honorary members on superannuated list.

By order of the Association, the Treasurer hereafter, shall take minute money from different church treasurers and put same in Bank and pay the treasurer of the Association \$1.00 for each church, as Clerk fee, and to pay for publishing of minutes on order of Clerk when published.

We, the Water Valley Free-Will Baptist Association of Mississippi, this day by unanimous vote, go on record as opposed to all-day singings on the Sabbath day. The day of the Lord set apart from public work, from secular work and employment to

the worship of God.

By vote of the body, Rev. Dave Smitherman will preach the Introductory sermon at the next Association.

Report on Education—We, your committee, make our report. We recommend that our preachers educate themselves in God's Word and ask that we encourage each other.

Rev. W. H. Fondren, D. M. Smitherman, G. W. Kennedy.

Church Reports

We, the church of God, Denominated Free-Will Baptists, worshipping at Springdale, send as delegates, G. C. Starnes, Elwood Daniels, Tom Stewart, Devo Starnes, Melvin Stewart. Our Deacons are McBowler, Jack Reynolds, T. F. McCord; Pastor, Rev. W. H. Fondren; Clerk, T. F. McCord. We have 40 resident members, 30 non-resident members; 14 additions to church. We send \$4.00 minute fund. We have lost one member, Bro. H. A. Starnes, who died August 4, 1925. We have in the treasury, \$4.00. Our time of meeting is the first Sunday in each month. Our address is Denmark, Miss., Route 1.

We, the church of God, Denominated Free-Will Baptists, worshipping at New Life, send as delegates to represent us, Bro. R. W. Hill, Sister Opal Hill and Bro. Jim Corder. Our pastor is Rev. Geo. C. Lee; Clerk, I. W. Corder; our deacons, Jess Morphis, T. L. Hancock, and J. M. Corder was elected a deacon, and we ask the Association to ordain him. We send \$6.00 minute money. Our membership is 88; active on roll 0. We have had one death to date—Sister Rhoda Purvis. In our body is two ordained preachers—Rev. H. B. Rogers and Rev. W. H. Tolloson. We have had added to this church this year, 33 members, 23 by experience and 10 by statement. Our time of meeting, 4th Sunday in each month. Spiritual interest good. Our address is Houlka, Miss., R. 4.

We, the church of God, Denominated Free-Will Baptists, worshipping at Pleasant Grove, send as delegates to represent us in your body, Bro's. John Bennett, Claude Long, Oscar Benjiman and Wilburn Warren. Our membership is 41 resident members; Received since last Association, 10. Our Deacon is, Joe McCoy, Clerk, Jim Thomas; Pastor, Eld. J. H. Norwood; time of meeting, Second Sunday in each month; spiritual interest good. We have

a good Sunday School and prayer meeting, regular preaching, and Conference. We send \$2.90 as minute fund. We have 11 non-resident members. We have in Treasury, \$13.30. Our address is Thaxton, Miss.

We, the church of God, Denominated Free-Will Baptists, worshipping at Stetson Chapel, send as delegates, Bro. Hoy Furgerson, Bill Akins, and Jim Frizzell. We have elected Bro. B. O. Tallant as deacon, and ask the Association to ordain him. We have 39 resident members in our church. Our time of meeting is First Sunday in each month. Our pastor is Rev. Geo. C. Lee; clerk, Jessie Frizzell; deacons, J. W. Sims, Martin May and elected B. O. Tallant. We send \$3.90 as minute fund. We have some money in the treasury. We have lost one of our members, Bro. J. H. Inmon. Our address is Toccopola, Miss., Route Two.

We, the church of God, Denominated Free-Will Baptists, worshipping at Bethlehem, send as delegates to represent us in your body, Dave Long, Andrew Montgomery and Herman Baker. Our pastor is Rev. Geo. C. Lee, our Deacons are Bob McCarver, Arthur Graham, Sam Tucker; clerk, B. E. Suggs. We have one ordained preacher in our body, Rev. Dave Smitherman; two licensed preachers, G. W. Kennedy and Tom Self. We have added 11 new members this year. We have lost one of our beloved members, Bro. Frank Tallant. He died in the faith. We have a membership of 214, resident about 136. We send \$10.00 as minute fund. Our time of meeting is the Second Sunday in each month. We have a good Sunday School and prayer meeting; preaching and conference regularly; spiritual interest good. We ask the Association to ordain Bro. G. W. Kennedy to ministerial work. Address, Pontotoc, Miss., Route Two.

We, the church of God, Denominated Free-Will Baptists, worshipping at Antioch, send as delegates to represent us in your body, Bro's. Bud Coleman, Emzie White and Laud Sledge; alternate, J. H. White, Dock Henderson. Our clerk is W. F. Bevel; deacons J. P. Hamilton and W. F. Bevill; pastor, Rev. W. H. Fondren for 1925 and 1926. Rev. Geo. C. Lee was pastor for 1924 and 1925. We have two ordained preachers, Rev. W. H. Fondren and Eld. J. H. Norwood. Our membership is 56. We have received 7 by experience of Grace; 2 by restoration; excluded none. Died, 3— Sister Essie Britt, Sister Mollie Stewart and Bro. Marshall Britt.

They died in faith. We send as minute fund, \$4.60. Our time of meeting is the Third Sunday in each month. Our address is Tocopola, Miss., Route One. (We have in treasury, \$15.56).

We, the Church of God, Denominated Free-Will Baptists, worshipping at Gauley, send as delegates to represent us in your body, J. R. Cantrell, Ivy Parker and Estelle Lee; alternate, Pearl Keenum and Floy Tolle. Our deacons are H. S. Parker, S. C. Lee and W. A. Calder; clerk, J. F. Parker; pastor, Rev. Geo. C. Lee. We send \$6.00 as minute funds; added experience of Grace, 13; active members 70; some non resident. We have a good Sunday School and prayer service. We have lost one of our members, Sister Ritter Fondren. She died trusting God. In our body is one ordained preacher, Rev. Geo. C. Lee. Our time of meeting has been First Sunday; but will be Third Sunday in each month, for 1926. Spiritual interest good. Address, Calhoun City, Miss., R. 1.

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We extend a vote of thanks to the Stetson Chapel Church and community for their generous treatment and hospitality shown this body while in session in their midst. May God's richest blessings rest upon this church and vicinity in the future, till we meet again. And should we never meet again in such assembly on earth, may we all meet in Heaven. With prayer for all, this closes one more glorious and harmonious session of the Water Valley Free-Will Baptist Association.

Church Covenant

1st. We believe that the union of Christians in a visible church is sanctioned by the teachings of Christ and the practice of His apostles, and that it is adapted to promote piety and increase Christian influences. We do now heartily enter into covenant before God and with each other.

2. We will constantly strive to maintain true piety in our own hearts, keep ourselves in vital communion with God and commend religion to others, not only in words, but by means of a devout spirit and a holy example, always careful of each other's reputation and usefulness.

3. We will watch over each other in the spirit of true charity, seeking to bear each other's burdens, assist the needy, strengthen the weak, encourage the despondent, sympathize with

the sorrowful, reprove the erring, win back the straying to duty, maintain wholesome discipline and receive Christian admonition in meakness, keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace and cheerfully submit to such regulations as the majority may approve. We will contribute according to our ability for pastoral support, maintain secret and family prayer; and aid by our presence and otherwise, in sustaining public and social worship.

4. We will give an active and consistent support to the great cause that aims to promote religion. We will refuse all sanctions to those worldly amusements which tend to lessen true piety in ourselves or weaken Christian influence over others, so that religion be not reproached on our account. May He who has promised His help enable us to keep this covenant, and grant us grace to be faithful in all things until He shall gather us to Himself and crown us with final victory. Amen.

Government of Churches

The local church is an independent body so far as it relates to its own government, the transaction of its own business, the choice of its officers and the discipline of its members.

Persons who give evidence of piety are received to membership by a vote of the church. If objections are made they should be stated to the church; if the objections are judged to be valid, the candidate should not be received to fellowship. The right hand of fellowship is given to all persons received by the church.

Persons expelled from sister churches for any cause, or from any church for immorality, should not be received until first giving satisfaction.

Letters of dismission and commendation are granted on request to members in good standing by vote of the church on their removal from its limits. Ministers are received and dismissed by letter, as other members, except when they come from or go to other denominations, in which case a council of ministers should be called to advise respecting the action.

It is the duty of the church to unite with some association, and represent itself regularly by delegates and letters.

No person shall be a delegate from a church or other body in

cur denomination unless he is a member of and appointed by the church which he claims to represent.

Constitution of the Water Valley Free-Will Baptist Association

1. This Association shall be known as the Water Valley Free-Will Baptist Association of Mississippi, and shall be composed of delegates from different churches forming the same, each church being entitled to three delegates and their ministers, clerks, deacons and treasurer.

2. Each church in this Association shall be an advisory body and shall control its own internal affairs.

3. This body shall be an advisory council, but having no authority over the churches.

4. The officers of this Association shall be a Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer, who shall be chosen at each session by a majority of votes.

5. This Association shall meet annually on Thursday night before the second Sunday in September of each year, and hold together until Saturday night and have the communion and feet washing on Friday night of each session.

6. Churches wishing to become members of this Association must adopt the articles of faith and this constitution, and conform to its usage.

7. We agree, as churches of this Free-Will Baptist Association, to use our best influence to promote the cause of Christ.

8. The minutes of this Association shall be the order of the business.

9. The Moderator of this Association at each annual session shall read the articles of faith in the minutes to the Association when convened.

10. The reasurer of this Association is to collect from the delegates of each church at the annual session and report to this body the first day of its meeting, ten cents per capita membership fee for each church.

11. Each member of this Association, at each session, must remain until the Association adjourns.

12. Inasmuch as we have placed an evangelist in the field in this Association we ask each member of each church in this Association to pay into the Treasury of their church \$1.00 annually for the evangelist's and pastor's and church expenses to be divided as follows: One third to evangelist; one third to pastor, and balance to church.

Rules of Decorum

Conference shall be conducted as follows:

1. Extension for membership.
2. Hear the reading of the minutes.
3. Invite visiting Brothers and Sisters to sit with us.
4. Call for unfinished business.
5. Call for acknowledgement.
6. Call for matters of dealings which are in order to come before the church.
7. Call for new business.
8. Call for absentees.
9. Call for miscellaneous business.
10. Call for move and second to close.

Articles of Faith of the Water Valley Free-Will Baptist Association

1. THE BIBLE—The Scripture of the Old and New Testaments were given by the inspiration of God, and the Scripture of the New Testament is our infallible rule of faith and practice.

2. GOD—There is one true and living God, revealed in nature as the Creator, Preserver and Righteous Governor of the universe, and in the Scriptures as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and yet as one God, infinitely wise and good, whom all intelligent creatures are supremely to love, adore and obey.

3. CHRIST—Christ is God manifest in the flesh. In His divine nature, truly God; in His human nature, truly man; the mediator between God and man. Once crucified, He is now risen and glorified, and is our ever present Savior and Lord.

4. **THE HOLY SPIRIT.**—The Scriptures assign to the Holy Spirit all the attributes of God. He is the Reprover, Comforter, Guide and Sanctifier of men.

5. **THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD**—God exercises a wise and benevolent Providence over all beings and all things by maintaining the constitution and laws of nature. He also performs special acts of Grace, not otherwise provided for, as the highest welfare of man requires.

6. **THE SINFULNESS OF MAN**—Man was created innocent, but by disobedience fell into a state of sin and condemnation; his posterity, therefore, inherit a fallen nature of such tendencies that all who come to years of accountability, sin and become guilty before God.

7. **THE WORK OF CHRIST**—The Son of God, by His incarnation, life, sufferings, death and resurrection, effected for all a redemption from sin that is full and free, and is the ground of salvation by faith.

8. **THE TERMS OF SALVATION**—The conditions of Salvation are repentance, or sincere sorrow for sin and hearty renunciation of it. Faith, or the unreserved committal of one's self to Christ as Savior and Lord with purpose and love to obey Him in all things. In the exercise of saving faith the soul is renewed by the Holy Spirit, freed from the dominion of sin, and becomes a child of God, continuing in faith and obedience until death.

9. **ELECTION**—God determined from the beginning to save all who should comply with the conditions of salvation, hence by faith in Christ men become His elect.

10. **FREEDOM OF THE WILL**—The human will is free and self-controlled, having power to yield to the influence of the truth and the spirit and live, or to resist them and perish.

11. **SALVATION FREE**—God desires the salvation of all; the Gospel invites all; the Holy Spirit strives with all, and whosoever will, may "come and take the water of life freely."

12. **GOSPEL ORDINANCE**—Baptism or the immersion of believers in water, and night communion and feet washing are ordinances to be perpetuated under the gospel of universal obligation, and are to be administered to all true believers.

13. PERSERVERANCE—All believers in Christ, who through grace, persevere in holiness to the end of life, have promise of salvation.

14. THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.—The divine law requires that one day in seven be set apart from secular employment and amusements, for rest, worship, holy works and activities and for personal communion with God.

15. RESURRECTION AND FINAL RETRIBUTION—The Scriptures teach the resurrection of all men at the last day. They that have done good will come forth to the resurrection of life, and they that have done ill, unto the resurrection of judgement; then the wicked will “go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous unto eternal life.”