

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

CONVENED WITH
BETHLEHEM CHURCH

*Thursday Night, Friday and Saturday,
September 8th, 9th and 10th, 1927*

REV. GEO. C. LEE, M. D.

W. F. BEVILLE, Clerk.

Next Session

WITH SPRINGDALE CHURCH, FIVE MILES WEST OF TOCCO-
POLA, MISS., ON FRIDAY AND SATURDAY BEFORE THE
SECOND SUNDAY IN SEPTEMBER, 1928—ELD. J. H.
NORWOOD TO PREACH INTRODUCTORY
SERMON

MINUTES

Of the Twenty-Ninth Annual Session of the Water Valley Free-Will Baptist Association of Mississippi.

FIRST DAY—NIGHT SESSION

The Twenty-ninth Annual Session of the Water Valley Free Will Baptist Association convened with Bethlehem Church, 7 miles Northwest of Pontotoc, Miss., on Thursday night before the second Sunday in September, 1927. Rev. G. W. Kennedy and Rev. H. B. Rogers preached, after which delegates were assigned homes, and adjournment was taken until Friday morning at 9 o'clock.

SECOND DAY—MORNING SESSION

Met by singing, and a lesson was read by the Moderator, Rev. J. H. Norwood, and prayer, the church letters were handed to Clerk and they were read and delegates were seated, churches as follows, Gauley, Antioch, Stetson Chapel, Springdale, New Life, Pleasant Grove and Bethlehem; also a new church, Free Hope. A hymn was sung and the hand of fellowship taken. There were corresponding delegates from Vernon Association of Alabama, Rev. J. M. Haas and John Stimbrige, seated by united vote. Election of officers for 1927: Rev. G. C. Lee elected Moderator, W. F. Beville elected Clerk, Jim Thomas elected Treasurer.

The Moderator appointed the following committees:

Preaching Committee—W. A. Calder, Hubert Roberts and Jack Reynolds.

Associational Committee—S. C. Lee, Jack Reynolds, Jim Corder, W. B. Sutherland, J. E. White, Arthur Graham and Jim Thomas.

Denominational Literature—Eld. J. H. Norwood, Rev. J. M. Haas, Rev. H. B. Rogers.

Finance Committee—L. M. Morris, C. D. Colman and R. C. McCarver.

Temperance Committee—Sister Helen Buchanan, Jennie Sutherland and Rev. W. H. Fondren.

Educational Committee—W. F. Beville, Willie Ridge and Dave Long.

Sabbath School Committee—Henry Ard, J. L. Coleman and

John Stimbridge.

Obituary Committee—Lon Morphis, Ivy Parker and Rev. D. M. Smitherman.

Move and second to adjourn for preaching by Rev. G. C. Lee.
Subject: "Obedience Lesson." Deut. 11 Chapter.

Adjourned for noon.

SECOND DAY—EVENING SESSION

Report of corresponding messengers from this association to the Vernon Association of 1926 session. Reports were made by Eld. J. H. Norwood and Rev. W. H. Fondren. Report gladly received.

By a move and second and unanimous vote the West boundary line of the Water Valley Free Will Baptist Association of Mississippi, was extended from the I. C. R. R. to the Mississippi River, and hereafter until changed again the river will be West boundary line.

Report of Temperance received and committee discharged.

Report on Sabbath School received and committee discharged.

By move and second and majority vote the 12th Art. of the Constitution was repealed and stricken from the Constitution.

Report of preachers follows:

Rev. W. H. Fondren Report

I have preached since last Association 42 sermons, traveled 450 miles, have had 20 conversions, received into the church 14 members, baptized 11, married 3 couples, conducted one funeral, received on expense \$22.95. May God bless this Association. My address is, Rev. W. H. Fondren, Toccopola, Miss.

Rev. G. W. Kennedy

I have preached 15 sermons, married 5 couples, expense \$4.00, traveled 106 miles, collected \$2.50. God bless me in my work—pray for me.

Rev. G. W. Kennedy.

Rev. Dave Smitherman

I have preached 63 sermons, married one couple, held two meetings, in three where there were 22 converts, 12 added to church,, baptized 9, have traveled 1,112 miles, received \$54.30, paid out \$50.70, above expense \$3.60. My work has been a great pleasure to me, may God bless all the churches. My address is, Toccopola, Miss.

Rev. H. B. Rogers

I have preached 7 times and helped in 4 revivals. Am delighted in my Master's service. My address is Pontotoc, Miss., R. F. D. No. 2.

Rev. G. C. Lee

I have preached 98 times, traveled 2,766 miles, received \$209.68, paid out \$55.85, received above expense \$153.83, have married 4 couples, conducted 4 funerals, organized 1 church with 24 members, baptized 6, had hundreds of converts and reclamations, had many pledges for family altars, conducted prayer in many homes. My address is Calhoun City, Miss.

Eld. J. H. Norwood

I have preached 16 sermons, preached 4 funerals, had 10 converts, received 7 into church, baptized 5, traveled 256 miles, married 1 couple, received \$3.31, paid out \$9.25. Toccopola, Miss.

Move and second to close for service, Friday night preaching by Rev. J. M. Haas, subject, "The Lord's Supper," followed by Eld. J. H. Norwood, subject, "Feet Washing;" after preaching the Association had communion and feet washing with love and fellowship.

SATURDAY MORNING—THIRD DAY SESSION

Lesson read by Rev. G. C. Lee: I Cor. 13 Ch.

The following committee reports received:

Associational Committee Report—We recommend that this Association require Bethlehem church to arrest and call in Bro. Tom Self credentials and silence him from the ministry. We also request this Association to require Antioch church to arrest and call in Bro. E. A. Lewis credentials and silence him from the ministry. We also request Bethlehem church to call in Bro. D. M. Smitherman credentials and silence him from the ministry until satisfaction is made to this Association.

We do this in brotherly love to each one justly to the Free Will Baptist cause.

We recommend that the Association meet hereafter on Friday morning at 9 o'clock for business instead of Thursday night. S. C. Lee, Jim Thomas, W. J. Reynolds, A. M. Graham, W. B. Sutherland, J. M. Corder and J. E. White.

We your Committee on Temperance make our report: We

recommmend our daily walk and life should be more temperate. Therefore, we should be temperate in all things, especially strong drink, we should be temperate in bearing one anothers burdens.

Helen Buchanan, Jennie Sutherland and Rev. W. H. Fondren.

We the Associational Committee beg to report the following: We reccommend that Bro. A. D. Morrison make due acknowledgements to the preachers, (Revs. Norwood, Fondren and Rogers), for having made certain statements which caused offence, and we also reccommend that Bro. J. H. Norwood make the church at Bethlehem acknowledgement, and also that Bro. W. H. Fondren and Bro. H. B. Rogers make acknowledgements to this church for having made statements to cause offence. We reccommend that each church have as many as three Scriptural Deacons.

Signed Committee, S. C. Lee, Chairman.

(Clerk the above requests were complied with buy each of the Brethren mentioned and due satisfaction made to all concerned on presentation of above report.)

We your Committee on Sabbath School beg to report that we find five Sabbath Schools in the Association, Gauley, Antioch, Pleasant Grove, Springdale and Bethlehem. We are glad to report an increase of two from our last report. We hope that the next session of our Association will find us one hundred per cent. We reccommend union literature such as published by the American Sunday School Union. We feel that a good, live Sabbath School to be one way to education to God's cause in a community, May it be taught in every church.

H. C. Ard, J. L. Stimbridge and T. L. Coleman.

We your Obituary Committee make our report. We find that our Association has lost 5 members since our last meeting, Sister Modenia Hall from Bethlehem, Bro. P. M. Hollis from Antioch, Sister Mollie Parker from Gauley, and Bro. W. M. Griffin, Sister May McGregory from Springdale. They all died in the Faith and the Promise to such ones who die in the Lord is eternal life.

Ivy Parker, Lon Morphis and Dave Smitherman.

We your Committee make the following report on Education. We believe there has never been a time that education should be looked after more than now. Education is progress to our civilization. We believe the time has come in the history of the church that education is in demand more than in the past. We urge our

people to seek to get the best of education, especially Bible learning and good literature in our homes. We urge study of the Bible first, that we may know the way of life, for Christ is the way—truth and life, in Him we live, move and have our being, seek ye first the kingdom of God and wisdom will be given.

Dave Long, Willie Ridge and W. F. Beville.

Preaching Committee Report—We recommend that Bro. Geo. C. Lee preach at the 11 o'clock hour on Friday, Rev. J. M. Haas at 8 o'clock Friday night, subject, "Communion;" followed by Rev. J. H. Norwood, subject, "Feet Washing," Saturday at 11 o'clock Rev. W. H. Fondren.

SATURDAY MORNING—THIRD DAY

By a majority vote of the body the next session of this Association will convene with Springdale church, Eld. J. H. Norwood to preach the introductory sermon. Adjournment for preaching by Rev. Fondren.

SATURDAY EVENING SESSION

Lesson read by H. B. Rogers, 23rd Psalm.

It was moved that we send corresponding messengers to the Vernon Association and the following Bros. were appointed: Rev. J. H. Norwood, W. H. Fondren and W. F. Beville.

We extend to Bethlehem Church and community our heartfelt thanks for the many kindnesses shown us while here, and the fine spirit of hospitality extended by every one—this has been one harmonious session and you with the noble representatives from the other churches have made it possible. May God bless Bethlehem people and may we be permitted to meet again with you some time.

New Life Church Report—We the Church of God, worshipping at New Life send as delegates Bro. Lon Morphis, Willie Ridge and Ward Tutor; Alternates Helen Buchanan and Mitchell Corder. Our pastor for 1927, J. H. Norwood; for 1928, W. H. Fondren; our Deacons, J. H. Morphis, J. M. Corder and T. L. Hancock; we send \$5.10 minute fee; we have received into church 7 members; In church treasury \$16.65; time of meeting 4th Sunday in each month; membership 51; dismissed 7; baptized 5; we have 2 ordained preachers, H. B. Rogers and W. H. Talloson, our address is Pontotoc, Miss., R. 4.

We the Church of God, denominated Free Will Baptist, worshipping at Stetson Chapel, send as delegates, Will Sutherland,

Sister Jennie Sutherland and Sister Matilda Sims; our membership is 45; we send \$3.80 for minutes; our Deacons are J. W. Sims, Martin May and B. O. Tallant; our clerk is Bro. Melvin Akers; treasurer Pearl Blaylock; our pastor Rev. Dave Smitherman past year; our day of meeting, 1st Sunday in each month; address, Toccopola, Miss.

We the Church of God, denominated Free Will Baptist, worshipping at Gauley, send as delegates Jim Lee, Ethel Lee and Ivy Parker and Floy Tolle. Our Deacons are S. C. Lee, H. S. Parker, and W. A. Calder; our clerk J. F. Parker last year, Edward Allen for 1928; our treasurer Goldie Moutry last year, Euvie Parker for next year; our pastor past year was Rev. Smitherman, for next year Rev. G. C. Lee; we sent \$5.25 for minutes; lettered out 4, received 5; we have 70 members, some resident and some non-resident; we have a good Sunday School; we have one ordained preacher, Rev. G. C. Lee; our meeting day is 1st Sunday in each month; spiritual interest good; our address is Calhoun City, Miss.

We the Church of God, denominated Free Will Baptist, worshipping at Antioch, send as delegates to represent us in your body, Bros. L. M. Morris, G. C. White and Bud Coleman; Alternates, J. H. White, Sister Milie Tutor; our treasurer is J. E. White; Clerk W. F. Beville; Deacons, J. P. Hamilton, W. F. Beville; our pastor past year, Dave Smitherman, for next year Rev. Geo. C. Lee; we have two ordained preachers, Rev. J. H. Norwood and Rev. W. H. Fondren; our membership is 45; we have received 6 by experience of grace, lettered out 3; died 1—Bro. P. M. Hollis, he died in a saving faith; we ask the Association annul the 12th article of the constitution; we send \$4.50 minute fund; our meeting day is third Sunday in each month; our address, Toccopola, Miss.

We the Church of God, denominated Free Will Baptist, worshipping at Pleasant Grove, send as delegates to represent us in your body, Bro. W. S. Warren, John Bennett and Jesse Long; as alternates, James Long and S. P. Carter; our membership is 34 resident members; received into church 7; excluded one; our Deacons are Jim Thomas and Claud Long; Lee Coleman our clerk; treasurer, Jim Thomas; our pastor, Rev. W. H. Fondren; time of meeting, second Sunday in each month; we have a good Sabbath School; we send \$3.00 minutes money; our address, Thaxton, Miss.

We the Church of God, denominated Free Will Baptist, wor-

shipping at Bethlehem, send as delegates, Henry Ard, Henry Graham and Dave Long; our clerk is B. E. Sugg; Deacons B. E. Sugg, Bob McCarver, Arthur Graham and Sam Tucker; we have called Rev. J. M. Haas to pastor us for 1927-28; we have three ordained preachers, Rev. D. M. Smitherman, Rev. G. W. Kennedy and Tom Self; Sister Rosie Tallant is our treasurer; membership is 170, resident members 70; we send \$7.00 for minutes; our time of meeting is the third Sunday in each month; we have received by experience of grace 1; had one death, Mrs. Hall; we have had conference several times and have Sunday School; our address is Pontotoc, R. 2.

We the Church of God, denominated Free Will Baptist, worshipping at Springdale, send as delegates Bro. Dan McClarty, Freddie Potts and Chester Coleman; Rev. W. H. Fondren is our pastor; T. F. McCord clerk; Top Starnes treasurer; M. C. Bowles, Jack Reynolds and T. F. McCord Deacons; we send \$3.50 for minutes; we have lost two of our members since last Association, Bro. W. M. Griffin and Sister May McGregory; received into church 7 members; we have 40 resident members and 25 non-resident; we have a good Sunday School; our time of meeting 1st Sunday of each month; our address is Denmark.

Petitionary letter to the Water Valley Free Will Baptist Association of Mississippi; Greetings:

We the Church of God, denominated Free Will Baptist, worshipping at Graham school house, 5 miles East of Lyon, Miss., Coahoma County, to the Water Valley Free Will Baptist Association, having had Rev. G. C. Lee conduct a revival meeting here the 3rd Sunday in August, 1927, and the following week, Rev. Lee organized us into a Free Will Baptist Church, we adopted the art. of Faith and constitution of the Free Will Baptist denomination, and adopt the Holy Bible as our rule of Faith and Practice; our name is Free Hope Free Will Baptist of Coahoma County, Miss., and we hereby petition membership in your body until such time that we can get enough churches organized in this part of the state to organize an association; we have 24 members; our Deacons are C. E. Francis and J. D. Bagwell; our clerk, Mrs. Francis; our treasurer, Lon Whitworth; our time of meeting 2nd Sunday in each month; we have called Rev. Geo. C. Lee for our pastor for 1927-28; we received into our church organization 4 from Free Will Baptist, 13 from M. Baptist and 7 converts; our address is Lyon, Miss.

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.

2nd. 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.

3rd. 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 meekness, keep the unity of the spirit in the bonds 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.

4th. 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.

Person expelled from sister churches for any cause, or from

any church for immorality, should not be received until first giving satisfaction.

Letters of dismissal 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 our 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 Friday 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 treasurer 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.

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 invite 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 judgment; then the wicked will “go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous unto eternal life.”