

MINUTES

— OF THE —

Fifty-Ninth Annual Session

— OF THE —

**West Florida Liberty Free Will
Baptist Association**

HELD WITH

**Poplar Head Church
Bonifay, Florida**

October 16 and 17, 1947



OFFICERS

BRO. JOHN M. RICH.....Moderator

BRO. WHIT LAURENCE.....Clerk and Treasurer

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

G. W. Owen, Chairman

Bill George

A. J. Pitts

D. Dykes

D. J. Cook



The next session of the Association will convene with St. John Church on Thursday and Friday before the third Sunday in October, 1948, Rev. John M. Rich to preach the Introductory Sermon.

The next Union Meeting will convene with Piney Grove Church on Saturday before the second Sunday in August, 1948, Rev. Martin Mears to preach the Introductory Sermon.

Proceedings . . .

*Fifty-ninth Annual Session
West Florida Liberty Free
Will Baptist Association*

1947

FIFTY-NINTH ANNUAL SESSION
WEST FLORIDA FREE WILL BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

West Florida Free Will Baptist Association met with Poplar Head Church on October 16 and 17, 1947.

Thursday Morning Session

After several good songs and prayers by the the choir, the Thursday morning session got under way. Bro. A. B. Nelson brought a message on "Destruction of the World by Satan." This message was especially appreciated because we feel Bro. Nelson is one of the oldest and most faithful in the Free Will Baptist ranks.

Thursday Evening Session

After enjoying a bountiful spread provided by Poplar Head Church, the congregation reassembled for further business. A devotional service, consisting of songs and prayers, began the service, after which the Association was called to order by the Moderator, Bro. Walters, with the reading of Matthew 6-2:11.

A call was made for corresponding letters from the sister churches. The following letters were received and delegates seated:

PINEY GROVE—G. W. Owen, T. D. Owen, J. A. Owen, Robert Owen, Oma Owen, Etha Mae Owen, Cora Sowell, M. Rich.

ST. JOHN—Bill George, Loran Cook, Lucille Cook, Dixie Pipkin, E. C. Cook, Mae Cook, J. D. Strickland.

PLEASANT HILL—J. W. Yates, Goldie Harrell, Charley Mears, Whit Lawrence, Ruby Harrell.

COWART'S CREEK—Bro. and Sister A. Fowler, Bro. and Sister H. B. Fowler.

BEULAH—B. H. Champion.

POPLAR HEAD—A. J. Pitts, Marie Jeffries, Radford Cherry, A. F. Squires.

ABIGAIL—Sister D. J. Cook, W. T. Morris.

LIBERTY—Arthur Cook, Claud Hicks.

BLOUNTSTOWN—W. M. Cochran, F. M. Knight.

Happy Hill, a newly organized church, comes seeking a home in our organization. It was moved and carried that this church be received with Bro. Ira Worthington representing as a delegate in our midst.

A call was made for correspondence or representatives of sister Associations. The following were received:

From Union Hill Association—Bro. J. W. Barefoot.

From Salem Association—Bro. and Sister C. L. Cook.

After all delegates had been seated, the Moderator appointed a committee for the purpose of revising the Articles of Faith. Free Will Baptists have not changed in their beliefs but in years of reprinting errors had crept in, in wording of some of the scriptures given, and in actual scripture given. Revision of the Articles of Faith consists simply of these corrections. Appointed on this committee were: Brothers John M. Rich, A. B. Nelson and Daniel Walters.

A Committee on Obituaries was appointed. They were E. C. Cook, Ruby Harrell, Oma Owen.

A Committee on Nominations was appointed. On this committee were: Earlie Peel, J. A. Owen, Goldie Harrell.

After hearing the report of Committee on Divine Service, the Association adjourned for the day.

Friday Morning Session

The service was opened by singing and a prayer by Bro. T. D. Owen. Bro. Walters, moderator, read a portion of the third chapter of James.

Call for Petitionary Letters was made. None received.

Call for Correspondence or Representatives from Sister Associations. Rev. K. V. Shuites was seated, a visiting brother from the Progressive Association.

At this time Bro. Shuites talked to the Association in behalf of the Orphanage at Eldredge, Ala. Bro. Shuites and other interested men, with the help of Free Will Baptists of that section, have secured the buildings and equipment for the orphanage, but funds for operation expenses must be secured. This orphanage will take Florida children, Bro. Shuites stated. Several pledges were made by individuals and churches. An offering was also taken and amounted to \$20.42.

Next came the Preachers' Reports. Bro. Walters, Bro. Nelson, Bro. Chesnut, Bro. Mears, Bro. Rich and Bro. Retherford made reports. Bro. Walters had a very commendable report, having pastored two half-time churches, and conducted ten revivals. Bro. Rich did a great work in a revival in Pensacola and organized a Sunday School at Flat Creek. Bro. Retherford, a newly ordained minister, has been preaching at Damascus of the Salem Association, and Happy Hill. Bro. Chestnut and Bro. Nelson reported that they are not as active in the work as they have been in previous years, but we believe that they are both a great asset to the community in which they live. Bro. Nelson has preached at Antioch part of the year and helped to run a Sunday School at Spring Hill. Credit for organization of Happy Hill Church goes to Bro. Mears, through the help of the Lord. Bro. Mears has been very active, pastoring two churches and working toward organization of Happy Hill.

All of our preachers gave their reports in an humble manner, giving the Lord the praise for all that had been accomplished through them.

At 11:00 o'clock, Bro. Walters brought an interesting message from Thessalonians 5:6-7-8. Before dismissal for lunch, Bro. Rich made a short talk, the thesis of which was "What are we, as Free Will Baptists, waiting for?"

Friday Evening Session

The Association was called to order by the Moderator, after the devotional service.

Reports of the various committees were then heard and adopted. They are as follows:

Report of Committee on Resolutions

We, your Committee, recommend that the ministers' and deacons' meeting hold but one session a year, this meeting to be held on some fifth Sunday designated by the Association and that each preacher and deacon be requested to attend. Also that each one on program receive his subject

not less than 30 days before the meeting. Likewise, we recommend that the Sunday School Convention be held but once a year, the time to be designated by this body. We further recommend that each church bring a program to this convention.

We also recommend that \$1.00 be requested of each member of each church in the Liberty Association to be used by the Home Mission Board for the purpose of building, painting or repairing churches, or to finance preachers for the organization or reinstating of churches in the bounds of the Liberty Association, or for any purpose that the Home Mission Board may see fit to use it for the furtherance of the Cause of Christ.

Respectfully submitted,

POPLAR HEAD CHURCH.

Report of Committee on Education

We, your Committee on Education, believe that the report given last year by Abigail Church cannot be improved in wording, but we, as Free Will Baptists, can give more earnest heed to it. We know that our denomination must become more educated in order to keep pace with our educated younger generation. We must improve our Sunday Schools and Church Societies, contribute to our colleges, keep our denominational literature in the homes, and keep in mind that an educated denomination means a greater denomination.

Respectfully submitted,

BLOUNTSTOWN CHURCH.

Report of Committee on Temperance

We, your Committee on Temperance, submit the following report:

We must study temperance from all angles. We must practice temperance in words, appetites, passions and temper. If we practice these we can build up our standard of temperance so as to be good examples and followers of our Lord. We suggest that all church members abstain especially from beer and liquors.

Submitted by **BEULAH CHURCH.**

Report of Committee on Sabbath Schools

We have a good Sunday School at St. Johns. It has been very small in number but deep in spirit, we trust. It has made some progress thus far this year and our prayer is that it will continue to do so in the future. We suggest also that all churches come through with a larger and more impressive Sabbath School in the coming year, feeling that it is such a grand training for our young boys and girls to be privileged to attend a well developed Sunday School.

We suggest that each church send a program to the Convention and permit the young people to have the important part in these programs.

We are inviting all to pray that we shall have better Sunday Schools in years to come.

Respectfully submitted,

ST. JOHN CHURCH.

Report of Committee on Obituaries

As we come to the end of another Associational year, we would not fail to recognize our dead.

From Piney Grove: Bro. Harvey Russell died Feb., 1947. Bro. Fussell was a member of our church and left a host of friends to mourn his passing.

From St. Johns Church: Sister Eugenia Hewett passed away March 19, 1947, at the age of 71. She was one of our oldest members, a loyal and faithful worker. Sister Clara Yates passed away at the age of 68. We shall miss the presence of these two sisters.

From Beulah: Bro. Tommie Golden, a faithful servant and deacon for 50 years, died Jan. 13, 1946.

From Poplar Head: Bro. Levi W. Johnson died Feb. 3, 1947, at the age of 89. We miss his influence and presence in the church and community.

From Liberty Church: Bro. J. Foster, a faithful member whom we love. We miss him in our church work.

From Pleasant Hill: Sister Janie Yates died on Jan. 28, 1947, at the age of 69. She was a faithful member and we miss her presence.

From Spring Hill: Rev. T. E. Ross, a beloved brother and co-worker. He was an able worker in the vineyard and we hope one day to meet Bro. Ross in a better world where death cannot come. Bro. Ross was a minister and a member of the Ordaining Council.

We all sorrow in the loss of these dear brothers and sisters, but we feel our loss is Heaven's gain.

EARL COOK
RUBY HARRELL
OMA OWEN

Report of Committee on Finance

Balance left over from 1946	\$38.00
Sent in for minutes and Ass'n purposes.....	48.01
For Missions	45.57
Superannuation	43.93
Amount paid Retired Ministers	43.93
Total without Mission and Superannuation	83.01

Report of Ladies' Auxiliaries

We, your Committee on Ladies' Auxiliary, find four auxiliaries in our Association, namely Piney Grove, Liberty, St. John and Blountstown. We recommend that all our churches organize and maintain a Ladies' Auxiliary, for we feel that the ladies hold a very important place in our church and should be recognized in their work.

LIBERTY CHURCH

Report of Committee on Stewardship

As your Committee on Stewardship, we beg to report that our more faithful members are putting forth efforts in stewardship for the Master, but we realize it isn't enough, therefore we resolve to ask all churches to do their best to get the combined efforts of all church members to cooperate in both financial and spiritual stewardship of God's Work in the F. W. B. Churches in the good, old-fashioned way.

We also recommend that there be more tithing preached and taught by the pastor of each church.

Submitted by ABIGAIL CHURCH.

Report of Committee on Nominations

We, your committee, suggest that the next session convene with St. John's Church on Thursday and Friday before the third Sunday in October, 1948, with Bro. John M. Rich to preach the Introductory Sermon.

The Union Meeting to convene with Piney Grove Church, Bro. Martie Mears to preach the Introductory.

EARLIE PEEL, Chairman •
J. A. OWEN
GOLDIE HARRELL

BOARD ON STEWARDSHIP

Ernest Owen D. Dykes Vera Owen

A motion was made and carried to set date for the Sunday School Convention and Preachers' and Deacons' Meeting of this year. The Sunday School Convention will convene on the second fifth Sunday of 1948 and the Preachers' and Deacons' Meeting on the third fifth Sunday of 1948.

Delegates to State Association—A. J. Pitts, Whit Lawrence, D. Dykes, Earlie Peel and T. D. Owen.

A motion was made and carried to place Bro. Daniel Walters in the Ordaining Council in the place of Bro. T. E. Ross, deceased.

The following officers were elected for the following year:

BRO. JOHN M. RICH—Moderator

BRO. WHIT LAWRENCE—Clerk.

Executive Committee: Bill George, D. Dykes, G. W. Owens,
A. J. Pitts, D. J. Cook.

Mission Board: A. B. Nelson, Ira Worthington, Earlie Peel,
Loran Cook, Ernest Owen.

RESOLUTION OF THANKS

We, the delegates and messengers which compose this Association, do sincerely thank the good people of Poplar Head Church for the hospitality shown us while among you. May your church grow and prosper and your community be blessed.

Committees Assigned Churches for 1948

Finance—Happy Hill

Education—Pleasant Hill.

Sabbath School—Abigail.

Auxiliary—Poplar Head.

Missions—Beulah.

Temperance—Coward's Creek.

Resolutions—Liberty.

Stewardship—Blountstown.

Divine Service—St. John.

Nomination—Piney Grove.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Introductory Sermon.
2. Call for Corresponding Letters and Enrollment of Delegates.
3. Call for Petitionary Letters.
4. Call for Correspondence from Sister Associations.
5. Assignment of Committees to the Churches.
6. Appointment of Correspondents.
7. Reading the Corresponding Letters.
8. Hearing Reports of Committees.
9. Election of Moderator and Clerk.
10. Miscellaneous Business.

Liberty Association's Ordaining Board

Daniel Walters A. B. Nelson J. H. Chesnut

Superannuation Board

R. Riley F. M. Knight W. R. Pipkin David Cook

Mission Board

T. D. Owen David Cook D. Dykes Henry Mears Charlie Mears
Rev. A. B. Nelson, Treasurer

Names of Ordained Ministers

A. B. Nelson
J. H. Chesnut
A. H. Retherford
J. C. Carnley
John M. Rich
W. M. Duncan
Daniel Walters
Martie Mears

CHURCH DECORUM

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

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

3. The pastor shall be Moderator of Church, but when the Moderator, being present, same as absent, or does not sit, a suitable brother shall be appointed in his place.

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

5. The deacons shall also take notice of such members as refuse or neglect to partake of the Lord's Supper and endeavor to ascertain the cause, that the same may be laid before the Church conference if necessary.

6. Some suitable member shall be appointed clerk, and it shall be his duty to do all the recording and other writing pertaining to the business of the Church, and preserve a file of the Minutes of the Association.

7. When a clerk is appointed all the books, minutes, etc., belonging to the clerk shall be immediately turned over to him by his predecessor.

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

9. The Church shall hold two days meetings embracing Saturday and the Lord's Day following, the first of which shall be the regular time for conference.

10. It shall be the duty of every member, male and female, to attend each conference, 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 church doctrine, discipline, and rules of holy living.

11. Any male member who shall fail to attend three successive conferences, and any member who may be generally remiss in attending meetings of the church in accordance with covenant (Article 10) shall be cited to appear in conference and answer for his conduct, but the church may exempt members from this if necessary.

12. Conferences shall be opened as follows: First, prayer; unless divine service has just been concluded, and generally then; Second, invite visiting brethren to have seats with us; Third, open doors for reception to members; Fourth, call for absentees; Fifth, for acknowledgments; Sixth, for references or deferred business; Seventh, for matters of dealing which are in order to come before the church; Eighth, for miscellaneous business.

13. Visiting brethren called in as help from other churches shall be allowed to vote.

14. An ordinary member of a Baptist church which does not hold this church in fellowship may be received into this church without a letter when it is made apparent that his Christian character is irreproachable; that he has applied for a letter and could not obtain it because he wanted to join this or some sister church. All other persons must join by letter baptism.

15. We receive members by experience or baptism; on confession of faith; by letter or restoration.

16. 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 the next conference.

17. No members shall be expelled unless he has been cited verbally or in writing to attend his trial, provided his residence be known to the church.

18. When a witness, not a member of the church, is introduced, he shall not be examined until the question has been put to the church: "Will you hear the testimony of the witness?"

19. The evidence in every case of dealing and acknowledgment shall be printed in the church book.

20. Members dismissed from the church by the letter who become disorderly or continue to hold their letter without good reason shall be cited to conference to answer for their conduct.

21. 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.

22. A vote shall not be taken on any question without a move and second, and on all important questions the vote shall be taken by rising to the feet.

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

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

25. No member shall leave the house during conference without a sufficient cause, nor engage in conversation or whispering, without being subjected to be called to order by the Moderator.

26. All discussions in conferences must be conducted with calmness and good feeling. Those who speak must rise to their feet and keep to

the point in debate.

27. No one shall speak more than three times on the same subject without permission of the Moderator, nor shall the remarks be unreasonably long.

28. When the Moderator speaks he must nominate some other brother as Moderator in his stead.

29. No one shall be interrupted while speaking unless it be necessary to call him to order.

30. We believe it to be the duty of the church to communicate, wash the saints' feet as often as the church sees fit, the expenses to be paid by the church.

31. Members not in good standing should not commune, but the administration should not be deferred on account of any ordinary matter of dealing.

ARTICLES OF FAITH

1. We believe in one true and living God; the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost.—1st John 5:7.

2. We believe that there is one Lord Jesus Christ by whom are all things, and by whom our salvation is made secure.—Heb. 2-9; St. John 3:16; 1st John 2:2.

3. We believe that in the beginning God made man upright and placed him in a state of glory, without the least mixture of misery, from which he voluntarily, by transgression fell, and by this means brought on himself a miserable and mortal state, subject to death.—Romans 5:15; Genesis 2:17; 3:19.

4. We believe that no man is excepted from the graces of God made possible through Christ; but that all may believe unto salvation, or disbelieve unto eternal perdition.—John 3:16; Romans 1:16; 1st Timothy 2:4.

5. We believe that the holy scriptures are the word of God and that they are the only rule of faith and practice.—John 5:10; 2nd Tim. 3:16.

6. We believe that sinners are drawn to God, the Father, by the Holy Ghost.—Rev. 22:17.

7. We believe that good works are the fruits of faith and faith without work is dead.—Mark 1:15; James 2:17,22.

8. We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free and attainable to all mankind.—Matthew 11:28,29,30; Titus 2:11,12; St. John 12:32.

9. We believe commemoration and feet washing are ordinances of Christ and immersion only is baptism.—St. John 13:1-17; St. John 3:5; 1st Corinthians 11:23-32.

10. We believe that all Christians should unite in performing the sacred ordinances.—St. John 6:53-54; St. John 13:8.

11. We believe that the end of the world is approaching when Christ will descend from Heaven and raise the dead from their graves to equal retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place, the righteous being adjusted to everlasting happiness and the wicked to endless punishment and this judgment will fix forever the final state of man in Heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness.—Rev. 22:12; St. John 14:2-3.

DECORUM OF LIBERTY ASSOCIATION

Article 1. This Association shall be composed of delegates from churches in good standing only, and shall be called together by the Moderator of last session if present. If absent, by his assistant, or some one elected by the body.

Article 2. This Association shall be opened and closed with prayer.

Article 3. The Moderator and Clerk of the last session shall officiate

until the body is organized and new officers are elected by ballot.

Article 4. The Moderator shall call the body to order and see that order is preserved. Submit all actions to the body. He shall have the same right of speech as any other member, but appoint some other brother as chairman while speaking. He shall not have the right to vote unless it be in case of a tie, then he may cast the deciding vote.

Article 5. The delegates shall be enrolled by the Clerk as they are seated in the body. And the roll shall be called each morning and all not answering to their names marked absent.

Article 6. That no delegate or minister shall be allowed to absent himself from the body during any session without permission from the Moderator.

Article 7. That each minister shall make a report of how many churches he is serving, if any, and what each church has paid him for his services.

Article 8. That no minister shall be considered in good standing that officiates in the rites of matrimony where either party has been divorced except it be for fornication.

Article 9. That no church shall be considered in this body that retains a minister or deacon that has more than one living wife or drinks intoxicating beverages.

Article 10. All business shall be brought before the body by move and second shall be disposed of according to good usage. But no move shall be submitted to the body when there is a move before the house, unless the first one be withdrawn by the person who made such move, and no person shall be allowed to speak more than three (3) times on the same subject, and not more than ten (10) minutes each time without a move and second from the body.

Article 11. No person shall be disturbed while speaking so long as he keeps to the point in debate, only by the Moderator, and then only to call him to order. Only one person shall be allowed to speak at a time and he must rise to his feet and address the Moderator, and he must not use abusive language or personal reflection upon anyone.

Article 12. This Association shall have a Treasurer and Executive Committee to be elected annually. And no church shall be considered in this body who shall, or have retained a minister that has stepped aside from his obligations in any form (as in 1st Tim. 3 Chapt.) unless said minister has shown by his action that he has repented of the former evil.

Article 13. That any minister who will voluntarily step aside shall immediately turn his credentials over to the executive committee and said executive committee shall visit various churches to see if they are in good standing or not and help them to retain good order.

Article 14. That no church shall retain a minister or deacon who does not rule his own house well.

Article 15. That no church shall be recognized in this body who does not commune and wash feet at least twice (2) a year and who does not have conference quarterly and each church shall state in its associational letter as to whether this ordinance has been kept or not. And also state how much it has paid its pastor. All ministers serving churches shall preach at least one sermon a year on doctrine and rules of holy living.

Article 16. Any preacher belonging to this body who sends an appointment or serving churches who fail to meet at the appointed hour, shall be due acknowledgments to congregation or church.

Article 17. No preacher shall preach in our churches that cannot bring a clear record from his home church.

Article 18. No preacher shall pastor a church unless he on his first trip produces his credentials.

STATISTICAL TABLE

Churches and Pastor	Clerks and Addresses										Meeting Days
		Baptism	By Letter	Restored	Confession Faith	Total Received	Dism. by Letter	Expelled	Died	Total	
Piney Grove—Daniel Waters....	Earlie Peel, Chipley, Fla.....	1	0	0	0	1	3	0	1	169	2nd & 4th Sun.
Liberty—Martie Mears	Claud Hicks, Vernon, Fla.	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	1	39	1st & 3rd Sun.
Beulah—Lee Mixon	B. H. Champion, Graceville.....	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	56	4th Sun.
Happy Hill—Martie Mears.....	Ruby Parish, Vernon, Fla.....	8	5	0	1	14	0	0	0	14	2nd & 4th Sun.
Pleasant Hill—J. A. Pettis.....	Ethel Harrell, Bonifay, Fla.....	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	53	4th Sun.
Cowart's Creek—S. T. Shuites..	J. C. Fowler, Dothan, Ala.....	9	2	0	0	11	1	0	0	164	1st Sun.
St. John—G. W. Nobles.....	E. C. Cook, Bonifay, Fla.	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	122	1st & 3rd Sun.
Blountstown—Daniel Walters..	F. M. Knight, Blountst'n, Fla...	0	1	0	1	2	1	0	0	70	1st Sun.
Abigail—J. A. Pettis.....	W. T. Morris, Vernon, Fla.....	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	2nd Sun.
Poplar Hear—J. A. Pettis.....	A. F. Squires, Bonifay Rt. 1.....	3	2	0	0	0	3	0	1	65	1st Sun.