

MINUTES

OF THE

Fourth Annual Session

OF THE

WEST FLORIDA BAPTIST

ASSOCIATION,

HELD WITH UNION ACADEMY CHURCH.

JACKSON COUNTY, FLA.,

October 26th to 29th,

1850.

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MINUTES.

THE WEST FLORIDA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION commenced her fourth annual session with the Union Academy Church, Jackson County, Florida, October 26th, 1850.

The introductory sermon was preached by Elder J. H. Wombwell, from Ephesians 2: 10. "We are his workmanship."

These services being concluded, after a short recess, the Association was called to order by the Moderator of the last session. After singing, prayer was made by Elder M. Westmoreland.

A call being made for the letters from the Churches, they were presented and read. No correspondence was received from several Churches, owing, perhaps, to their having been for a long time destitute of regular ministerial service.

The Association then proceeded to the election of officers, when Elder Joshua Mercer was chosen Moderator, and E. Minchin, Clerk.

An opportunity being made for churches desirous of connecting themselves with the Association, to present their letters and delegates, the Flat Creek Church, Gadsden, and the Mount Pisgah Church, Jackson County, Florida, petitioned for admission and were received, and the hand of fellowship was extended to their delegates by the Moderator.

Messengers from Corresponding Associations were requested to present themselves, and affectionately invited to participate in our deliberations.

It was announced that brethren Wiley Blewitt and G. M. Williams were present from the Florida, and brother Mark Westmoreland from the Tuskegee. At a subsequent period of the session, brethren D. Gartman and C. Thomas, of the

Bethlehem, M. B. Ellis, of the Salem, and brothers Aldridge and Renfro of the Tuskegee, arrived and were welcomed as Corresponding Messengers.

A member of the Econfina Church being present, in the absence of other delegation, on motion, he was received as the representative of that Church, and requested to give the statistics of the Church; which was done.

On motion, the following committees were appointed:

On business.—J. H. Wombwell, S. J. Rowe and J. Wooten.

On Religious Exercises.—D. P. Everett, J. Byrd, G. W. Underwood, J. H. Wombwell, and Jesse Mercer.

On Finance.—D. P. Everett, J. R. Jones, and A. J. Tippins.

On Nominations.—J. H. Wombwell, J. Byrd, and J. Wooten.

On Documents.—J. H. Wombwell, G. W. Underwood and W. W. Odom.

On Ordination.—J. H. Wombwell, of the West Florida, W. Blewitt, of the Florida, M. Westmoreland, of the Tuskegee, and M. B. Ellis, of the Salem Associations.

The Association then adjourned to meet on Monday morning at 9 o'clock. Prayer by Elder S. J. Rowe.

LORD'S DAY.

The congregation was addressed by Elders M. Westmoreland and Joshua Mercer, in the morning, and by Elders W. Blewitt, and J. H. Wombwell, in the afternoon. At the close of the latter services, the Lord's supper was administered. Elder S. J. Rowe and brother G. M. Williams labored for the colored people. A collection was taken up amounting to \$30.

MONDAY, October 26, 1850.

The Association assembled pursuant to adjournment. Prayer by Elder T. L. Hansford.

The minutes of Saturday were then read and the roll

called. The committee on business presented their report, which was adopted, and the committee discharged.

A sealed letter was presented to the Association. On motion, it was referred to a committee composed of D. P. Everett, J. R. Jones, and S. J. Rowe, for examination. The committee retired, and on opening the letter found it to be from the colored branch of the Apalachicola Church. The letter was read before the Association, and, on motion, Elder J. H. Wombwell was requested to advise the church concerning the matter in question.

The report of the committee to visit Mount Pleasant Church was presented and adopted.

Your committee visited Mount Pleasant Church in the early part of the year, and found it in disorder as reported. Aware of the difficulties the church had to contend with, and the circumstances by which it was surrounded, we advised the church to dissolve. The advice was taken in the spirit it was given, and the church was regularly dissolved. Your committee are happy to say, that in their opinion, all action in the premises has been proper—the entertaining of which opinion is justified by present prospects.

Submitted respectfully,

J. H. WOMBWELL,

Chairman.

The committee on ordination presented their report, which was adopted.

Your committee have examined brother W. W. Odom in reference to his experience of grace and call to the work of the ministry, and recommend the churches desiring his ordination, that it be postponed until he shall have informed himself more fully concerning the doctrines taught in the scriptures. Brother Odom manifests a most commendable spirit, and we affectionately advise him to continue his labors in exhorting the ungodly to fly from the wrath to come, believing that he has been blest of the Lord in exercises of this kind. For the benefit of the churches and people generally, we ask the privilege of presenting a few points im-

portant to be understood and kept in view by those who wish to act according to the teachings of the word of God.

1st. The churches are independent, and sovereign in all ecclesiastical matters.

2d. The pastors of churches are in every respect New Testament bishops.

3d. The qualifications of bishops, as mentioned in the writings of St. Paul, particularly aptness to teach, should never be overlooked in calling a brother to that so very greatly responsible office.

Respectfully submitted,

J. H. WOMBWELL.

The Circular Letter was presented, read and adopted, and will be found appended to these minutes.

Messengers to Corresponding Associations were then appointed.

To the Bethlehem, to be held with the church at Montgomery Hill, Baldwin county, Ala., Saturday before fourth Lord's day in September—W. W. Odom and W. L. Hatton.

To the Tuskegee, to be held with the church in Auburn, Macon county, Ala., Saturday before third Lord's day in September—Joshua Mercer and D. P. Everett.

To the Salem, to be held Saturday before first Lord's day in October—Joshua Mercer and D. P. Everett.

To attend the organization of a new Association at Honecytown, Dale county, Ala., Saturday before first Lord's day in December—J. Mercer, D. P. Everett, J. R. Jones, and W. L. Hatton.

To the Florida, to be held in Thomas county, Ga., Saturday before second Lord's day in October—J. Byrd, T. L. Hansford, and J. R. Jones.

To the Bethel, to be held with the church in Palmyra, Lee county, Geo., Saturday before first Lord's day in November—J. H. Wombwell.

The proceedings of the General Meetings for the year past, were read, and meetings for the next year were appointed.

For the first District, Friday before fifth Lord's day in March—Flat Creek Church, Gadsden county, Fla.

For the second District, Liberty Hill Church, Washington county, Florida, Friday before 5th Lord's day in June.

The next session of this Association was then appointed to be held with the Rehoboth Church, Orange Hill, Washington county, to commence Saturday before the 4th Lord's day in October, 1851.

A letter containing a donation of \$24 20, and specifying its direction, was received from the Bethlehem Female Missionary Society, Jackson county, Fla.

On motion, it was resolved, that we tender our thanks to the members of the Bethlehem Female Missionary Society for their donation and kind expressions of interest in our operations.

Resolved, That we commend this example to the notice and imitation of others disposed to co-operate with us in supplying the destitute with the gospel.

The committee on nominations reported as follows:

Elder S. J. Rowe, write Corresponding Letter. Elder J. Mercer, preach next Introductory Sermon; S. J. Rowe, his alternate. Elder D. P. Everett, write Circular Letter.

The Association then adjourned until to-morrow morning 9 o'clock. Prayer by Elder M. B. Ellis.

TUESDAY, October 29th, 1850.

The Association convened according to adjournment. Prayer by the Moderator.

The Executive Committee made their report, which was adopted. See Appendix A.

The Committee on Finance presented their report, which was adopted. See Appendix B.

The Committee on Documents presented their report, the reading of which was followed by remarks from Elders M. Westmoreland, W. Blewitt, and J. H. Wombwell. The report was then adopted. See Appendix C.

The state of the churches belonging to the Association, and the best means of supplying their destitution, originated a committee, who presented through their chairman, Elder D. P. Everett, the following resolutions:

Resolved, That the several churches now destitute of pastoral care, be recommended to keep up their regular meetings among themselves, and to pray unceasingly to the Lord of the harvest to send them laborers.

Resolved, That our ministering brethren be requested to visit and labor with such destitute churches, as often as possible.

Resolved, That as it is more blessed to give than to receive, the churches be requested to send up with their next letters such amounts as they may be able for Foreign, Domestic, and Indian Missions, to be applied as they may direct.

Resolved, That we recommend to the churches to observe the evening of the first Lord's day in each month as a time of special and earnest prayer to God, that for Christ's sake, He would send forth more laborers into this part of His moral vineyard, and for the spread of the gospel every where.

Elected for an Executive Committee, T. Barnes, J. Byrd, J. B. Everett, G. W. Underwood, G. A. Hill, J. R. Jones and E. Minchin. The Treasurer having been elected chairman of the Executive Committee, William Sorey was elected to the office of Treasurer.

It having come to the knowledge of the Association that the Domestic Mission Board, S. B. C., had appointed Elder J. H. Wombwell missionary to Brownsville, Texas, and that in consequence he was about to leave the Association, the following resolutions were passed:

Whereas, our brother, J. H. Wombwell, who has been laboring among us for nearly two years as a minister of the gospel, is about to leave us for a distant mission, therefore

Resolved, That we tender to our beloved brother our sincere thanks for his faithful labors among us.

Resolved, That we cordially recommend him to the community where his lot may be cast, as a good citizen, a scholar, a pious Christian, and a faithful minister of the gospel:

Resolved, That these resolutions be printed in the minutes of the present session of this body, and that a copy of the same be published in the South Western Baptist.

The business of the Association being nearly completed, the following resolutions were adopted:

Resolved, That our thanks are due to Mr. S. J. Erwin for the use of the Academy, and to the brethren and community for their kindness and hospitality extended toward us during our session.

Resolved, That the clerk have the Rules of Decorum of this Association printed with the present minutes.

Resolved, That the clerk have 500 copies of these minutes printed and properly distributed among the churches, and that \$15 be allowed him for his services.

The business being finished, Elders Westmoreland and Blewitt delivered interesting addresses, which seemed to reach the hearts and feelings of all present. These concluded, the Moderator announced the body to stand adjourned to the Saturday preceding the 4th Lord's day in October, 1851, to meet with the Rehoboth Church, Orange Hill, Washington county, Florida.

JOSHUA MERCER, Moderator.

E. MINCHIN, Clerk.

CIRCULAR.

THE WEST FLORIDA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, TO THE CHURCHES OF WHICH SHE IS COMPOSED.

DEAR BRETHREN:

In sending you our annual epistle of love, we feel it to be our duty to call your attention to the destitution existing in our bounds, and to suggest to you the means at your control by the application of which it may be removed.

The territory embraced within the bounds of this Association, comparatively speaking, is quite extensive, forming an area of about ten thousand square miles. Many portions of it are thinly inhabited, and in some parts such is the situation of the people in a pecuniary sense, that they are unable of themselves, to have the Word of Life dispensed for their own advancement in spiritual things. We say this without entertaining any desire to cast reflections on our brethren, and we hope that none will become offended with us though we speak plainly, and represent their necessities. Our motives are good; we have no other desire than to see every family placed in the enjoyment of gospel privileges, and to all given the opportunity of attending regularly on the ministration of the word. There are many settlements where no churches are yet planted; there are many individuals who have no saving knowledge of the plan of human redemption from eternal woe, and who have no one to point them to the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." This is a lamentable fact, and calls upon the highly favored of the Lord to use themselves as instruments in rescuing never dying spirits from an awful thralldom. This must be done or they will perish, and if they perish, they perish indeed, yea, they perish forever and ever.

At our last session the churches in general in their letters, complained of coldness, barrenness, and lukewarmness. Perhaps this state has been brought upon them on account of their parsimony. We know from the teachings of inspiration that blessings follow liberality, for it is said by the oracles of Wisdom that "they who give to the poor lend to the Lord;" and again, "there is that giveth and yet increaseth, there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty." The problem then is solved; we are cursed, even the whole body, because we have withholden our tithes and offerings. No question need be asked about whose fault it is. It is the fault of the churches, plain and prominent.

The question that we should now ask is, shall this con-

tinue to be our fault! The churches cannot expect the world to be the messengers of the gospel; no obligation rests upon unregenerate men to send the life-giving word abroad; they are commanded to receive and believe it for themselves. The churches then are the proper agents, they have the work to perform, and their duty must be discharged before they can stand uncondemned in the sight of Him who rules in Heaven and earth. If this be the proper position to be occupied by the churches of Christ, it is becoming in us to examine our doings, that we may discover how near we have heretofore come to the fulfilling of our duty to God and man.

By reference to the minutes of our last session, you will find that there were at that time four hundred and sixty-four members in our churches, and that these sent up for Associational and Missionary purposes the sum of seventy-three dollars and seventy-one cents, or less than two dimes for each member. Brethren, was that amount an exponent of our ability or our willingness to assist in the noble work assigned to us by the great Head of the church? If the former, truly we are destitute of the means to help ourselves; if the latter, how little regard have we for the salvation of our fellow beings. Now none is disposed to humiliate himself so much as to confess that he cannot give more than this pittance to support the preaching of the gospel; the tables are thus turned against us at once, and we see the bounds of our feelings, the extent of our disposition to supply the destitution of the ministry in our midst.

Last year your Executive Committee engaged the services of a brother to travel through the Association as Missionary, promising to do what they could for him; he performed his arduous and fatiguing duties with a commendable degree of Christian perseverance, and at the close rendered an account of his expense, which, taking his situation into consideration, was moderate; but moderate as it was, your committee fell in arrears to him, and were placed under the disagreeable necessity of acknowledging them-

selves unable to meet his just claims. The committee could no longer employ him, and consequently we have had no Missionary in the field this year.

Brethren, if the Lord has placed the means in our hands and we will not consecrate them to His service, have we any right to complain of the prevailing destitution, or need we be surprised at our coldness and barrenness? Had the churches properly responded to the calls of the agent as they might readily have done, your committee could have met the expenses of employing a Missionary last year, and secured his services for this; but instead of such action, you have suffered the toils of our brother to pass unrequited, and the field to remain uncultivated, except so far as the same brother has labored, being partially sustained by one church and the Domestic Missionary Board S. B. C.

Now let me ask you, if you can place your hand on your breast and say that your duty has been discharged? Have you given as you were able? Have you given as the Lord hath prospered you? Beware how you respond to these questions lest your conscience condemn you and pronounce the portentous sentence against you "Thou art weighed in the balance and art found wanting."

We think it would be an easy matter to raise one dollar per year for each member towards the support of the gospel among you; this would make an amount sufficient to sustain two missionaries in places where there is now no regular preaching. We suggest to you the propriety of making an effort to raise at least this amount. O brethren, will you not "come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty?" Will you not give of your substance to the promulgation of the glad tidings of salvation?

The Deacons are the fiscal officers of the church, and to them belong appropriately the duty of relieving their ministering brethren from temporal cares, that they may give themselves wholly to the ministry of the word. We hope the Deacons will see to this duty, and will aid the ministry

in the discharge of the obligations imposed on them to "go and preach the gospel."

And now, brethren, we pray the great Author of all good to bless you, and to make you experience the joys of knowing all the fulness of Christ's redeeming love, and at last to save you with His chosen Israel. Amen.

JOSHUA MERCER, Moderator.

E. MINCHIN, Clerk.

CORRESPONDING LETTER.

THE WEST FLORIDA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,

TO THE ASSOCIATIONS WITH WHOM SHE CORRESPONDS.

DEAR BRETHREN:

A gracious Providence has permitted us to hold our fourth annual session in great harmony, for which we praise our great Moderator. We were very thankful for the presence of the Messengers sent from your respective bodies, and we humbly trust their "work of faith and labor of love" will prove a lasting blessing to us.

There is among us a great want of ministerial labor, and in consequence of this, several of our churches are tottering, falling and hastening to decay, and soon will be dead. We solicit your sympathies and prayers in this our melancholy condition, and would joyfully receive any aid your supply of ministerial laborers may be able to afford us.

Our next meeting will be held with the Rehoboth Church, Orange Hill, Washington county, Fla., commencing Saturday before the fourth Lord's day in October, 1851. We hope and earnestly desire then again to meet with your highly esteemed and dearly beloved Messengers.

JOSHUA MERCER, Moderator.

E. MINCHIN, Clerk.

DECORUM.

ARTICLE I. Those members who are regularly chosen by the churches in our union, shall compose the Association.

ART. II. The members so chosen shall produce letters from their respective churches, certifying their appointment, together with their number in fellowship, those baptized, received by letter, restored, dismissed, excommunicated, and dead, since the last Association. Also a statement of the amount of funds sent up by the delegates, and for what purpose; and any other contribution made during the year.

ART. III. The members thus chosen and convened, shall be denominated "The West Florida Baptist Association."

ART. IV. The Association shall have a Moderator and Clerk, who shall be chosen by the members present.

ART. V. This Association shall have no power to "lord it over God's heritage," nor by which she can infringe upon any of the internal rights of the churches.

ART. VI. If newly constituted churches, or others, desire to be admitted into this union, they shall petition by letter and delegates, and if found, upon examination, to be orthodox and orderly, shall be received by the Association, and such reception shall be manifested by the Moderator's giving to the delegates the right hand of fellowship.

ART. VII. Each church in this Association shall be entitled to two delegates until her number of members exceed fifty; for every twenty-five above that number she shall be allowed one additional delegate.

ART. VIII. Every query sent to the Association by any of the churches in this union, shall be read and put to vote by the Moderator, whether it shall be discussed, and if there be a majority for discussion, it shall be taken up and considered; if not, it shall be withdrawn. *Provided always*, That those be first considered which affect the union of the churches.

ART. IX. Every motion made and seconded, shall come under the observation of the Association, except it be withdrawn by the member who made it. The last motion shall be the first in order.

ART. X. Every person who speaks in debate shall rise from his seat and address the Moderator, and shall not be interrupted while speaking, except he depart from the subject.

ART. XI. No person shall speak more than three times on the same subject, without permission from the Association.

ART. XII. There shall be no talking or whispering in time of a public speech, nor shall any reflection be cast upon the speaker.

ART. XIII. No member shall absent himself from the Association without leave from the Moderator, and the Association is not considered closed until after the Farewell Sermon is preached.

ART. XIV. If any member shall break the rules of this Decorum, he shall be immediately reproved by the Moderator.

ART. XV. It is the business of this Association, 1st, to provide for the general union of the churches; 2d, to keep up a correspondence with Associations of the same faith and order, that a chain of communication may be preserved among the churches; 3d, to give the churches the best advice in matters of difficulty, and if the communion between any of the sister churches be broken, to inquire into the cause of the breach, and use the best means to remove the difficulty; but if the breach cannot be made up, to withdraw from any church whom they shall look upon as unsound in principle or disorderly in practice, until she be reclaimed; 4th, to admit any of the brethren in the ministry as assistants, if they shall deem it to be necessary; 5th, to appoint a clerk to keep the records of every meeting of the Association and to see that he is properly remunerated for his services; 6th, to have the minutes read and corrected, if need be, before the

Association rises, and have them printed, if they think proper; 7th, to adjourn this year of government at any time when a majority of the Association shall deem it necessary; 8th, to adjourn to any time and place considered most proper.

APPENDIX—A.

The Executive Committee held a meeting in the early part of the Associational year, for the purpose of making arrangements to supply the destitution in our bounds with the gospel, but were prevented from committing themselves from the fact that the former committee had been unable to meet their engagements. The Association has enjoyed the labors of Elder J. H. Wombwell, and we have allowed him for his services the sum of \$100, which amount has been made up and paid him by private brethren.

The churches have sent up quite a respectable amount for missionary purposes another year, and we hope that for the future more extensive operations shall be carried on.

G. W. UNDERWOOD, Chm'n.

B.

The Committee on Finance have received through the delegates from the churches, for minutes, \$19 15; for Missions, 119 15; from Collectors on Sabbath, 30 00; from brethren of Salem Association, per J. Mercer, 19 50—Total, \$187 80.

D. P. EVERETT, Ch'mn.

The West Florida Baptist Association in account with T. Barnes, Treas'r.

1850—To amount in hand for building M. H. in Marianna, - - -	\$30 00
" " " " for other purposes, - - -	2 00
Oct. 5—To amount received of G. W. Gunn, Chairman Committee Miss. Meeting, Tuskegee, Ala., per Elder D. P. Everett, - - -	28 00
Oct. 13—To amount received of brother Newman, - - -	1 00
	\$61 50

CONTRA.—Jan. 15—By cash pd for transport'n of minutes, - - -	\$1 50
April 6—By cash pd towards M. H. in Marianna, - - -	30 50
Oct. 16—By cash pd J. H. Wombwell for services, 1849, - - -	29 50

\$61 50

THOS. BARNES, Treasurer.

C.

The Committee on Documents find in the Corresponding Letter from the Tuskegee Association, that they are about to establish in the town of Tuskegee, Ala., a Female College of high order. Verbally we learn the Florida Association is engaged in a similar enterprise. The interest these brethren have manifested in our prosperity calls upon us to aid by our prayers and patronage, their institutions. We recommend a consideration of the merits of these schools to our brethren having children and wards to educate.

We recommend to our reading brethren "The Southwestern Baptist," published in Marion, Alabama. It is a most excellent newspaper, and is ably edited by Rev. A. W. Chambliss. It ought to be made the paper of our Association.

J. H. WOMBWELL, Chm'n.

STATISTICAL TABLE.

CHURCHES.	Post Offices.	DELEGATES.	Baptized.	Rec'd by let.	Restored.	Dis. by let.	Excluded.	Deceased.	Total.	By delegat's for minutes	By delegat's for missions.	Monthly Meetings.
<i>First District.</i>												
Big Spring,	Open Pond, Alabama,	E. Minchin, W. L. Hatton,	3	2	1	1	1	43	3 00	24 00	2d	Lord's day
Mount Pisgah,	Martanna, Florida,	T. L. Hansford, J. Sellers,	3	2	2	4	1	31	1 35	10 00	4th	"
New Hope, Alabama,	Millwood, " "	D. D. Odum, W. W. Odum,	2	1	13	3	1	23	1 00	10 00	3d	"
Sardis,	Chattahoochee, " "	J. R. Jones, John Byrd,	3	1	3	1	1	32	1 50	15 00	4th	"
Union Academy,	Marianna, " "	J. H. Wombwell, Jesse Mercer,	3	1	2	1	1	32	3 00	3 00	1st	"
Apalachicola,	Apalachicola, " "	Henry Fort,	3	1	3	1	1	30	1 50	3 00	"	"
Flat Creek,	Chattahoochee, " "	S. J. Rowe, John Wooten,	3	1	3	1	1	30	1 00	10 00	1st	"
<i>Second District.</i>												
Bethlehem,	Campbellton, " "	G. W. Underwood, A. J. Barksdale,	3	6	1	1	1	67	3 00	8 15	4th	"
Keonfina,	St. Andrew's Bay, " "	A. J. Tippins,	7	3	1	1	1	8	55	11 00	2d	"
Holmes' Valley,	Holmes' Valley, Fla.	T. R. Mercer, J. Nelson,	3	3	1	1	1	95	1 25	11 00	2d	"
Harmony,	Cerro Gordo, " "	No letter nor delegate,	3	3	1	1	1	16	25	11 00	2d	"
Holmes' Creek,	Campbellton, " "	" " " " " "	3	3	1	1	1	10	25	11 00	2d	"
Liberty Hill,	Holmes' Valley, " "	" " " " " "	3	3	1	1	1	27	25	11 00	2d	"
New Hope, Florida,	Alaqua, " "	" " " " " "	3	3	1	1	1	37	25	11 00	2d	"
Rehoboth,	Orange Hill, " "	Joshua Mercer, D. P. Everett,	3	3	1	1	1	67	2 00	38 00	3d	"
NOTE.—Ordained ministers in small capitals. Licentates in italics. Other ministers, H. Mercer, Oakesee; D. Gunnar, Alaqua. * No. reported last year. 26/15/24/10/5/460/19 15/119 15/												
Due for printing minutes fourth session \$27 00—balance against minute fund, \$7 85.												