

**KENTUCKY BAPTIST
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY**

MINUTES

Of the first annual meeting of the Middle District Association of Baptists, held at Mount Moriah, in Shelby county, on the first Friday before the fourth Saturday in July, 1837.

THE introductory sermon was delivered by brother John Holland, from 1st Peter, 3d chapter and 13th verse, "*And who is he that will harm you? if ye be followers of that which is good.*"

Letters from the several Churches, were called for, read, and the messengers names enrolled, as follows:

CHURCHES.	MESSENGERS' NAMES.	Rec'd. by Exp. & Bap'sm.					Total Number.
		Received by Letter.	Restored.	Dismissed by Letter.	Excluded.	Dead.	
BETHEL.	Fleet Howard, Benjamin Martin, Daniel Dodd, W. G. Rice, Isaac N. Guthrie, Jacob Watts and Abram Perry.	1	16	1	1		212
BEECH CREEK.	Moses Scott, Peter Bass, A. S. Doggett, James Morton and John McCampbell.	3	15	1	1		106
MOUNT MORIAH.	E. Waller, E. Hedden, S. Ramsey, E. Searcy, O. Mahuren and F. H. Garnett.	1			1	1	97
PIGEON FORK.	Moses Tipton, George Morris, Robert Scott, Archibald Tinsley, Thomas Oliver and D. Riley.	3				1	72
SALEM.	John Holland, John Shepherd, John Dooley, H. S. Caress and Thomas McClure.	1	9	2	3		217
		3	6	40	5	7	704

The Association then proceeded to the election of Moderator and Clerk:

Whereupon, brother A. S. Doggett was chosen Moderator, and brother Benjamin Martin, Clerk: And, after prayer by brother F. Davis, then invited visiting brethren to seats with us.

The constitution of the Association called for, and read.

Received a letter from Salem Church proposing to join us—which was received into union with us, and the messengers invited to seats.

The circular letter called for, read, and adopted.

Agreed to correspond with the following Associations, viz: Long Run, Sulphur Fork, Franklin, Baptist, Elkhorn, South District and Salem.

A committee appointed to draft rules of decorum for the Association—brethren J. Holland, Daniel Riley and F. H. Garnett.

Brethren appointed to write corresponding letters—J. McCampbell, J. N. Guthrie, H. S. Caress and J. Dooley.

J. Holland, Daniel Riley, F. H. Garnett, with the Moderator and Clerk, were appointed a committee of arrangements.

After prayer by brother John Major, adjourned until 9 o'clock to-morrow morning.

SATURDAY MORNING, 9 O'CLOCK.

Met pursuant to adjournment, and after prayer by brother E. Tummers, proceeded to business.

1st. The rules of decorum called for, read, and adopted.

2d. The committee of arrangements made report, which was received, and proceedings had in accordance therewith, as follows:

3d. This Association in future agree to hold her annual session on Friday before the last Lord's day in July.

4th. Our next Association to be held at Bethel, Shelby county.

5th. Corresponding letters called for, read, received and brethren appointed to bear them, as follows, viz:

To Franklin, at Mount Pleasant Meeting House, Franklin county, on the third Saturday in September next—brethren D. Riley, M. Scott and P. Bass.

To Long Run, at Plumb Creek Meeting House, Spencer county, the first Friday in September next—brethren Moses Tipton, E. Searcy, D. Riley, J. Holland and H. S. Caress.

To the Baptist, at Salt River Meeting House, Anderson county, the Friday before the first Saturday in August next—brethren T. Oliver, R. Scott, A. Tinsley and B. Seeders.

To Elkhorn Association, to meet at Dry Run, Scott county, Ky: on the second Saturday in August next—brother Daniel Riley.

To Sulphur Fork, to meet at Providence Meeting House, the second Friday in September next—brethren Moses Tipton and G. Morris.

To South District, to meet at Bethlehem, Washington county, on Friday before the third Saturday in August next—brother F. H. Garnett.

To Salem, to meet at New Hope, Washington county, on the first Friday in October next—brethren M. Tipton, J. Morten, H. S. Caress and J. Dooley.

6th. Brethren appointed to preach to-morrow—F. Davis, J. Major and W. Blanton.

7th. Brother D. Riley to preach the next introductory sermon, and J. McCampbell to write the next circular letter.

8th. Money collected for Printing the Minutes, and brethren J. Dooley and B. Martin to superintend the Printing and distributing of the same.

9th. Agreed that the Union Meetings for the ensuing year be as follows: first, at Salem; second at Bethel, and third at Beech Creek.

A. S. DOGGETT, *Moderator.*

BENJAMIN MARTIN, *Clerk.*

CIRCULAR LETTER.

The Messengers composing the Middle District Association of Baptists, to the Churches which they represent, sendeth greeting:

BELOVED BRETHREN IN THE LORD:

As this is the epoch of our Associational existence, it becomes our duty particularly, in brotherly love, to address you on the great subject calling us together, on which we have been deliberating, viz: the glory of God and the good of Zion. With reference to these, our Associational Union was formed; not to legislate for, nor monopolize the power over, the Churches; but to promote Union and strengthen their bonds. As brethren, thus identified, it behooves us to keep in mind the great design of our Union. When the Lord converts sinners, and brings them into his fold, He designs them to live to his glory and promote the good of others. How, dear brethren, shall we best secure these objects, within our limited sphere? As a matter of the first importance, we should be united; Union will be our strength—Union our ornament. An house divided, has neither strength nor beauty. Though a little band, if united, we shall be as the deep rooted oak that wrestles with the wind and defies the tempest; but if disunited, we shall break before the breeze and be borne away on the tide of error. This is the fruitful era of the Apostle's warning—the prolific age of heresy and discord. Let us take the Bible, the lamp of Heaven, the sword of the spirit—may its sacred truths be inscribed on our hearts, and acted out in our lives. Thus shall we mingle as kindred drops of

the same fountain and be one according to the example, the doctrine and command of Christ. Let us unite dignity with meekness, patience with firmness, zeal with perseverance, and prayer with duty: then shall we grow as a well watered tree, richly laden with precious fruit: then shall we be comely as Jerusalem, and terrible as an army with banners: then shall we be as the dew of Zion and ointment of Aaron: then shall we be as the salt of the earth, and a city on a hill: then shall we not be discouraged, though few, feeble, and poor. Now, some may be fearful as to influence and usefulness. How often have we seen the happy pair commence their conjugal career amidst the wealthy sons of liberty, and by industry, economy, and perseverance, rise up to competency and respect. It is true that we are but a feeble band, surrounded by old, large, and respectable Associations, enriched with virtue and talent; with biblical and literary intelligence, which have obtained a commanding eminence; but this is, instead of discouragement, a matter of joy. The peculiarity of Christians is to help each other. Will our brethren frown us down? No. This would betray a want of the spirit of Christ, and develope a spirit of intolerance incompatible with our holy religion. Our brethren will aid us by their labors and their prayers. The great matter is, are we built on the rock—do we look to Jesus—there may we confidently look for success. Though talents and numbers are desirable, let us not depend on them, but on the dear Saviour—whose prerogative alone it is—to add to his people, and increase them in grace and number, with the increase of God.

Then, dear brethren, let our aspirations unceasingly ascend to God, perfumed with the incense offered on the golden altar. Prayer brings us near the throne, and Heaven near to us. Prayer brings us low in the dust of humility, and elevates the soul to fellowship with God. Prayer gives us to feel our own weakness, and nerves us with more than human strength. Prayer eclipses earthly glory, but casts an effulgence around religion. Prayer weans from earth, but allures to glory. Yes, prayer makes us happy, strong and successful.

Brethren, let us read the book God gave us; it is God's will and our treasure; it will direct us in our course, animate us in our trouble, and arm us for the conflict. May love, that celestial fire, warm our bosoms—may her soothing voice whisper peace, and may she cast over us her golden mantle. Without love, all is blighted; Zion will bleed, peace will expire, pilgrims will mourn, and enemies triumph. If brotherly love, with all her kindred train, be ours, then will the God of peace be with us; the Prince of peace rule in us, and the dove-like spirit take his abode with us—then will Jesus be glorified—we shall be

happy, and Zion the asylum of the weary. It is our duty brethren, from the word of God, to learn what is truth. We should make no compromise with error—it promises fair, but always deceives, misleads, and bewilders; but truth, like a diamond in the dark, will guide us all along the journey of life, till its radiance is lost in the beams of Heaven. Brethren, God's work is like himself: the plan of redemption, like a wisely constructed machine, it secures the great object of its divine author—all its parts harmoniously move to the same great end—God's glory in the holiness and happiness of his people. It is not enough for us to say we are religious, but must carry the practical testimonial that we are so. Theory alone will do but little good—it is like a castle built in the air that may please the vision, but not subserve the interest. The faith of the gospel leads to obedience, God's sovereignty leads to reverential submission, while the doctrine of grace leads to a holy life.

Again, dear brethren let us stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance. Many of the Baptists have long been reproached as delinquent to their ministry. How far this is just, let us, with the fear of God in our hearts and the balance of justice in our hands, determine. We are apprised of the fact that many have verged to extremes on this subject; but this should not deter us from the sober medium of the Bible on the subject. Let us generously sustain the heralds of salvation, who break to us the bread of life, that they may be disencumbered with the affairs of this life, and consecrate all their energies to the great work. May the Lord give us faithful laborers. Let us foster the gifts that are among us. God will bless us in the discharge of our duty—in the use of those means of his own appointment. His shall be the glory, while ours is the benefit.

Finally, while we give to God our hearts, and devote to him the best efforts of our lives, let us be all of one mind, having compassion one of another—love as brethren, be courteous, not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrarywise, knowing that we thereunto are called, that we should inherit a blessing. Time will soon go by—we retire to rest—meet in glory—be with Jesus, and be forever at home. In love, farewell!

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

MIDDLE DISTRICT ASSOCIATION.

ARTICLE 1. We believe it to be essentially necessary and useful for regular Baptist Churches to assemble once in every year in an associated capacity, to advise in such matters as may, by them, be deemed necessary; but in no case to assume any higher authority than an advisory council: that all Church business of a Church nature shall be settled by the Churches.

ARTICLE 2. This Association shall be called by the name of the **MIDDLE DISTRICT ASSOCIATION OF BAPTISTS**, and shall consist of messengers from such Baptist Churches as now compose it, as a body, and such others as may hereafter be admitted as members.

ARTICLE 3. The officers of this Association shall consist of a Moderator and Clerk, to be chosen by private ballot, at each Annual Session.

ARTICLE 4. At such meeting of the Association, the Moderator and Clerk, who acted at the last Session, shall continue to act, until others be chosen in their stead.

ARTICLE 5. At each Annual Meeting of the Association, the Churches composing her, as a body, shall each send up, by her messengers, a letter, containing a brief statement of the condition of the Church—of which the messengers are members.

ARTICLE 6. The Association may receive into and dismiss a Church, or Churches, from her Union; and when any Church, or Churches, shall become disorderly in practice or heretical in doctrine, may exclude her or them from her Union.

ARTICLE 7. We believe in the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, of the Old and New Testaments, as the complete and infallible rule of faith and practice, and that they teach the unity of God, and the existence of three equal persons in the Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; these three are one, equal in glory, dignity, eternity and power: the total depravity of all mankind, in consequence of the fall of Adam, and their consequent just condemnation. We believe in

the doctrine of Election, as held forth in the Scriptures; atonement for sin, by the death of Jesus Christ, and its special relation to the sins of the elect; effectual calling and regeneration, by the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit; justification by the righteousness of God, in Jesus Christ, received by faith; Christian Baptism, that is, the immersion of believers only, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; the divine obligation to strictly observe the Lord's day, and to maintain the worship of God in public, and in private; the perseverance of the saints; the resurrection of the body, and general judgment; the endless happiness of the righteous, and the endless misery of the wicked; and the obligation of every rational intelligent person to love God supremely, to believe what God says, and practice what God commands.

ARTICLE 8. In cases of importance, the Moderator, with the consent of two Churches, may call the Association together, and when thus called and assembled, shall possess all the powers which appertain to that body, at its Annual Meetings.

ARTICLE 9. This Association shall be held at the Senior Church, and so on in succession, unless otherwise changed for good cause.

ARTICLE 10. This Constitution may be altered, amended, or abolished, at any time, when a majority of two thirds of the members present shall agree and concur therein.

This Constitution adopted, and signed by the members from four Churches, appointed for that purpose, April 9th, 1837, viz:

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|---------------------|---|---|
| 1ST. BETHEL:::~::~: | { | <i>Fleet Howard,</i>
<i>Jacob Watts,</i>
<i>Benjamin Martin.</i> |
| 2D. BEECH CREEK:: | { | <i>John R. Martin,</i>
<i>Absalom Doggett,</i>
<i>Moses Scott,</i>
<i>John McCampbell.</i> |
| 3D. MOUNT MORIAH | { | <i>Fleming H. Garnett,</i>
<i>Elisha Hedden.</i> |
| 4TH PIGEON FORK:: | { | <i>Moses Tipton,</i>
<i>George Morris,</i>
<i>Enoch Yates,</i>
<i>Robert Scott.</i> |

ABSALOM DOGGETT, *Moderator.*

BENJAMIN MARTIN, *Clerk.*

A. G. HODGES, Printer, "Commonwealth" Office, Frankfort, Ky.

