

Minutes of the General Conference
—OF THE—
BRETHREN IN CHRIST,
(Known as River Brethren.)

HELD AT THE ANTRIM CHURCH, NEAR GREENCASTLE, PENNA.,
MAY 20TH, 21ST AND 22D, 1896.

WEDNESDAY MORNING.

After Scriptural reading and devotional services, the Conference was formally opened by Elder Jesse Engle, of Donegal, Kan.

The organization resulted as follows: Elder Martin Overholser, Moderator; Elder Samuel Zook, of Abilene, Kan., and Elder Isaac Trump, of Polo, Ill., Assistant Moderators; J. R. Zook, of Des Moines, Ia., Secretary; D. V. Heise, Clarence Centre, N. Y., Assistant Secretary; S. E. Graybill, Martinsville, Pa., Reading Clerk.

The Church was represented by delegation as follows:

Illinois—David Stoner, Whiteside Co.; H. L. Shirk, Shannon, Carroll Co.; Isaac Trump, Polo, Ogle Co.

Iowa—J. R. Zook, Des Moines.

Ontario—F. Leibeck and S. Leibeck, Nottawa; Samuel Baker, Markham; Jonas Wenger and D. V. Heise, Black Creek.

Pennsylvania—James B. Detweiler and Geo. Tyson, Bucks and Montgomery Cos.; Jos. D. Keefer, Lykens Valley; Jacob K. Kreider, Lebanon Co.; Samuel E. Brehm, Dauphin Co.; Aaron C. Wingert, A. S. Leshner and George Wingert, South Franklin; D. Martin Miller and Isaac Kensinger, Morrison's Cove; Henry L. Heise and Simon Graybill, Manor; Henry B. Hoffer and David Wolgemuth, Rapho; John Wolgemuth, M. B. Musser, David Englesen and Aaron Martin, Donegal; J. B. Nisley and Jonas Wert, Cumberland Co.; Abraham Wingert, Martin Overholser and Samuel Hoover, North Franklin.

Ohio—J. B. Wingert and A. M. Engle, Dayton.

Kansas—Jesse Engle, Donegal; Henry Davidson, Abilene.

Indiana—John Stump and Michael Shirk.

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON.

After devotional exercises Conference entered upon her duties.

The unfinished work of Conference of 1895 in reference to the election of Church officers by a majority vote as recommended and formulated by the committee appointed by Conference was acted upon as whether it should be accepted or rejected. After due consideration it was rejected.

On motion it was decided that a committee of twelve be appointed to formulate a new method of electing ministers. Name of committee—Samuel Baker and D. V. Heise, Oantrio; Jacob Kreider, T. A. Long, S. E. Graybill, Pennsylvania; A. M. Engle and J. B. Wingert, Ohio; John Stump, Indiana; J. R. Zook, Iowa; Isaac Trump, Illinois; Jesse Engle and Noah Zook, Kansas.

The request of Conference of 1895 asking for the election of a new Board of Publication of the EVANGELICAL VISITOR was brought up for consideration. After some thought it was deferred until Thursday afternoon.

The members of the Board of Publication of the EVANGELICAL VISITOR presented their annual report of the financial condition of the paper, which report was accepted.

On motion it was decided to exonerate the retiring Board of Publication and appoint a new Board.

On motion it was decided that a Board of Publication consisting of seven members be appointed—nominated by a nominating committee and confirmed by conference. Names of committee—S. E. Graybill, Pennsylvania; Aaron Martin, Pennsylvania; D. V. Heise, New York; Henry Heise, Canada; Henry Trump, Polo, Ill.; Jesse Engle, Kansas; Jonathan Wert, Pennsylvania.

Of the above Publishing Committee one member shall be discharged each Conference year, beginning with the first name. Such member, however, is eligible to re-election.

THURSDAY MORNING.

The usual devotional services were engaged in after which Conference resumed business.

On motion it was decided that a publishing committee of three members be appointed by the Publication Board. Names of committee of Publication—H. N. Engle, of Kansas, editor; Samuel Zook, of Kansas; T. A. Long, of Pennsylvania, advisors; Samuel Zook to act as treasurer this Conference year.

The relocation of the Evangelical Visitor was presented, and after a thorough discussion by the representatives of the various districts which made applications, namely—Pennsylvania, Iowa, Ohio and Kansas—the vote then was taken which resulted in favor of Pennsylvania.

It is decided that Henry Davidson, the present editor, shall continue the publication of the paper until October 1, 1896, at which time it shall be moved from Abilene, Kan., to Harrisburg, Pa.

We, the brethren of Dallas, Blackhawk and Benton counties, Ia., pray General Conference to give us the liberty to choose the Elder whom we may desire to officiate at our Lovefeasts and preside at our Councils, etc.

The above request is granted.

Recess of ten minutes.

The report of the Foreign Mission fund by Jacob E. Stouffer, treasurer, of Newton, Kan., was read and accepted with an expression of congratulation to him for his efficient labor in the collection of \$419.60.

The Foreign Mission work was then brought before Conference. Deferred until Friday morning.

THURSDAY AFTERNOON.

Conference opened by singing and prayer.

On motion it was decided that we have a Corresponding Secretary appointed at the place of next Conference. Bro. W. O. Baker, of Louisville, O., is appointed to correspond with railroad managers to secure rates for Conference.

The advisability of holding General Conference earlier in the season was considered. Decided to make no change.

A request for General Conference to appropriate \$200 from the fund designed to aid in the erection of church buildings for the removing of the indebtedness of the Brethren's meeting-house in Harvey Co., Kan. Request not granted.

On motion it was decided the brotherhood have a Church directory. Elder Henry Davidson, of Abilene, Kan., shall arrange said directory.

The committee appointed by Conference to formulate rules for the election of ministers, submitted the following method to Conference, which was approved. Decided: That the former method of electing ministers be retained with the provisions that when brethren have a calling of the Holy Ghost to preach the gospel, shall reveal their convictions to the officials of the Church, who shall in connection with the Church of local district give them such encouragement as they deem proper, and when finding them worthy, after a careful examination, shall be ordained to the ministry.

FRIDAY MORNING.

After spiritual songs and fervent prayers Conference opened for business.

Foreign Mission work again taken into consideration. On motion it was decided that a committee of five be appointed to formulate a plan for Foreign Mission work. Names of said committee: H. Davidson, A. M. Engle, H. L. Shirk, Samuel Zook and Samuel Brehm.

Report of the General Missionary Fund of the United States was given in full and accepted. Conference tenders her sincere regards to Bro. Saxon Bowers, of Canton, Ohio, for his efficient services as Treasurer.

A petition of Howard, Pa., requesting Conference to make provisions to supply their need in the ministry was acted upon. On motion it was decided that Bro. Peter Keagy, of Woodburg, Pa., preside over the above named district.

The committee appointed to formulate a plan for Foreign Mission work presented the following:

Resolved, That the Foreign Mission Board consisting of twelve members, appointed by General Conference take charge of the Foreign Mission work.

That it shall be the duty of said Board to take an active interest in the Foreign Mission work in way of soliciting contributions in their respective districts.

That a report of their work shall be given to each General Conference.

That in connection with the General Foreign Mission Board there shall be an operating Board consisting of three members to whom all applications shall be made by those whom the Lord calls into the work.

That said Operating Board shall be empowered to examine all applicants, who, when found worthy, shall receive recognition as workers.

That all applicants must be fully consecrated to God.

That one of the Operating Board be Treasurer of Foreign Mission fund, which shall be used only to support Foreign Mission workers.

That the Lord shall do the calling and provide for the going.

That the Operating Board make an annual report to the General Foreign Mission Board of all receipts and expenditures.

Names of General Foreign Mission Board:

Ontario—Peter Steckly, Peter Climmhaga, John Wildfang.

Pennsylvania—S. E. Graybill, Martin Overholser.

Ohio—A. M. Engle, Samuel Whisler.

Indiana—Michael Shirk.

Illinois—A. L. Myers.

Iowa—J. R. Zook.

Kansas—Noah E. Zook, J. N. Stouffer.

Operating Foreign Mission Board—Elder Samuel Zook, Abilene, Kan.; Elder Henry Davidson, Abilene, Kan.; Elder Jesse Engel, Dohegal, Kan.

FRIDAY AFTERNOON.

The usual devotional exercises were observed in song and prayer.

A letter from Bro. J. W. Hoover, of the Chicago Mission, was read and on motion their resignation was accepted, and a vote of thanks tendered them for their labor and faithfulness, with a donation of \$150 to be paid out of the General Mission Fund of the United States.

On motion it was decided to appoint Bro. and Sister H. L. Shirk, of Chadwick, Ill., to carry on the mission work in Chicago, Ill., this Conference year.

On motion it was decided that Elder Isaac Trump, of Polo, Ill., shall, after due examination, ordain Bro. Benjamin Brubaker, of Chicago, Ill., to the ministry.

Bro. Jacob M. Engel, of Hancock, Pa., was selected member of the standing committee.

Through the wisdom of kind Providence our beloved Elders, Levi Lukenbaugh, Martin Hoover, Henry Engle and Conrad Long were removed to their long homes by death.

Their fidelity to the Church is recognized and highly appreciated by this Conference with an expression of regret for our loss which we trust is their eternal gain.

Thus, one of the most important Conferences ever held by the Brethren in Christ concluded her grave and aggressive work. A solemn and impressive admonition was then given by several Elders as an incentive to more earnest work and complete consecration to the Lord. Surely, the sweet remembrance of this Conference will live long in the memory of the attendants.

MARTIN OVERHOLSER,

MODERATOR.

JOHN R. ZOOK,

SECRETARY.