

## **History of Free Will Baptists in the United States**

The Free Will Baptist denomination is a fellowship of evangelical believers united in extending the witness of Christ and the building of His Church throughout the world. The rise of Free Will Baptists can be traced to the influence of Baptists of Arminian persuasion who settled in the colonies from England.

The denomination sprang up on two fronts at almost the same time. The southern line or Palmer movement traces its beginnings to the year 1727 when one Paul Palmer organized a church at Chowan, North Carolina. Palmer had previously ministered in New Jersey and Maryland, having been baptized in a congregation which had moved from Wales to a tract on the Delaware River in northern Pennsylvania.

The northern line, or the Randall movement, had its beginnings with a congregation organized by Benjamin Randall June 30, 1780, in New Durham, New Hampshire. Both lines of Free Will Baptists taught the doctrines of free grace, free salvation, and free will, although from the first there was no organizational connection between them.

The northern line expanded more rapidly in the beginning and extended its outreach into the West and Southwest. In 1910-1911 the body of Free Will Baptists merged with the Northern Baptist denomination, taking along more than half of its 1,100 churches and all denominational property, including several major colleges. On December 28, 1916, at Pattonsburg, Missouri, representatives of remnant churches in the Randal movement reorganized into the Cooperative General Association of Free Will Baptists.

Free Will Baptists in the southeastern United States, having descended from the Palmer foundation, had often manifested fraternal relationships with Free Will Baptists of the Randall movement in the north and west, but the slavery question and the Civil War prevented formal union between them. The churches in the southern line were organized into various associations and conferences from the beginning, and had finally organized into a General Conference by 1921. These congregations were not affected by the merger of the northern movement with the Northern Baptists.

Now that the remnants of the Randal movement had reorganized into the Cooperative General Association and the Palmer movement had organized into the General Conference, it was inevitable that fusion between the two groups of Free Will Baptists would finally come. In Nashville, Tennessee, on November 5, 1935, representatives of the two groups met and organized the National Association of Free Will Baptists.

This body adopted a treatise which set forth the basic doctrines and described the faith and practice that had characterized Free Will Baptists through the years. Having been revised on several occasions, it serves as a guide line for a denominational fellowship which comprises more than 2,400 churches in 42 states and 14 foreign countries.

The National Offices are located at 5233 Mt. View Road, Antioch, Tennessee 37013-2306. National departments operating here include the Executive Office, International Missions,

Home Missions, Retirement and Insurance, Free Will Baptist Foundation, Master's Men and Women Nationally Active for Christ. The mailing address is PO Box 5002, Antioch, Tennessee 37011-5002. Welch College is located at 3606 West End Avenue, PO Box 50117, Nashville, Tennessee 37205. Randal House Publications is located at 114 Bush Road, PO Box 17306, Nashville, Tennessee 37217.

## Questions on History of Free Will Baptists in the United States

These questions are taken directly from each paragraph.

### Paragraph 1

1. The Free Will Baptist denomination is a fellowship of what?
  - a.
  - b.
2. The rise of Free Will Baptists can be traced to whom?  
Answer:
3. Where did they settle?  
Answer:

### Paragraph 2

1. Where did this denomination spring up from?  
Answer:
2. There was the southern link or?  
Answer:
3. What year were their beginnings traced to?  
Answer:
4. Who organized a church in Chowan, North Carolina?  
Answer:
5. Where did Paul Palmer previously minister?  
Answer:
6. Paul Palmer had been baptized in a congregation which had moved from where?  
Answer:
7. Where did Paul Palmer settle?  
Answer:

### Paragraph 3

1. What was the northern line called?  
Answer:
2. Where did the Randal movement begin?  
Answer:
3. What doctrine did the two lines of Free Will Baptists teach?  
Answer:
4. Was there an organizational connection between them?  
Answer:

### Paragraph 4

1. Which line expanded more rapidly?  
Answer:
2. Where did it extend its outreach?  
Answer:
3. What year did the northern line merge with the Northern Baptist denomination?  
Answer:
4. How many churches were involved?  
Answer:

5. What else ended up in this merger?  
Answer:
6. What was included in the denominational property?  
Answer:
7. Where did the representatives of remnant churches in the Randall movement reorganize?  
Answer:
8. What did they reorganize into?  
Answer:

### **Paragraph 5**

1. Free Will Baptists in the southern United States descended from whom?  
Answer:
2. Did the Palmer foundation have a fraternal relationship with those of the Randall movement?  
Answer:
3. What prevented a formal union between the Palmer foundation and the Randall movement?  
Answer:
4. When did the churches of the southern line (Randal movement) organize into a General Conference?  
Answer:
5. Was the southern line affected by the merger of the northern movement with the Northern Baptists?  
Answer:

### **Paragraph 6**

1. Who was reorganized into the Cooperative General Association?  
Answer:
2. Who was organized into the General Conference?  
Answer:
3. When and where did these two groups finally get together?  
Answer:
4. What is the name of the organization that was formed?  
Answer:

### **Paragraph 7**

1. What did this new body adopt?  
Answer:
2. What did this treatise set forth?
  - a.
  - b.
3. What does this treatise, after several revisions, set forth?  
Answer:

4. This National Association comprises more than:
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.

**Paragraph 8**

1. Where are the National Offices located?  
Answer:
2. What National departments are operating here?
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
  - e.
  - f.
  - g.
3. What is the mailing address?  
Answer:
4. What is located at 3606 West End Avenue, PO Box 5117, Nashville, Tennessee, 37205?  
Answer:
5. What is located at 114 Bush Road, PO Box 17306, Nashville, Tennessee, 37217?  
Answer:

The End

## **Free Will Baptists Church Covenant**

Having given ourselves to God, by faith in Christ, and adopted the Word of God as our rule of faith and practice, we now give ourselves to one another by the will of God in this solemn covenant.

We promise, by His grace, to love and obey Him in all things, to avoid all appearance of evil, to abstain from all sinful amusements and unholy conformity to the world, from all sanction of the use and sale of intoxicating beverages, and to "provide things honest in the sight of all men."

We agree faithfully to discharge our obligations in reference to the study of the Scriptures, secret prayer, family devotions, and social worship; and by self-denial, faith, and good works endeavor to "grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together for church conferences, public worship, and the observance of the ordinances of the Gospel; nor fail to pay according to our ability for the support of the church, of its poor, and all its benevolent work.

We agree to accept Christian admonition and reproof with meekness, and to watch over one another in love, endeavoring to "keep the unity of the Spirit" in the bonds of peace, to be careful of one another's happiness and reputation, and seek to strengthen the weak, encourage the afflicted, admonish the erring, and as far as we are able, promote the success of the church and of the Gospel.

We will everywhere hold Christian principle sacred and Christian obligations and enterprises supreme; counting it our chief business in life to extend the influence of Christ in society, constantly praying and toiling that the kingdom of God may come; and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

To this end we agree to labor for the promotion of educational and denominational enterprises, the support of missions, the success of Sunday schools, and evangelistic efforts for the salvation of the world. And may the God of peace sanctify us wholly, and preserve us blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## **Questions on the Free Will Baptists Church Covenant**

These questions are taken directly from each paragraph.

### **Paragraph 1**

1. How do we give ourselves to God?  
Answer:
2. What do we adopt as our rule of faith and practice?  
Answer:
3. What do we do by the will of God?  
Answer:
4. What is the Church Covenant called?  
Answer:

### **Paragraph 2**

1. What do we promise by His grace?
  - a.
  - b.
2. What do we promise by His grace to abstain from?
  - a.
  - b.
3. What are we to provide in the sight of all men?  
Answer:

### **Paragraph 3**

1. How are we to discharge our obligations in this paragraph?  
Answer:
2. What are we to do by self-denial, faith and good works?  
Answer:

### **Paragraph 4**

1. List three events we are not to forsake?
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
2. List three events that we are to pay according to our ability?
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.

### **Paragraph 5**

1. How are we to accept Christian admonition and reproof?  
Answer:
2. How are we to watch over one another?  
Answer:
3. In the bonds of peace, what do we endeavor to do?  
Answer:

4. What are we to be careful of?  
Answer:
5. Who are we to seek to strengthen?  
Answer:
6. Who do we encourage?  
Answer:
7. Who do we admonish?  
Answer:
8. What are we to do as far as we are able?  
Answer:

### **Paragraph 6**

1. Where will we hold Christian principle sacred and Christian obligations and enterprises supreme?  
Answer:
2. What is to be our chief business in life?  
Answer:
3. What are we to be constantly praying and toiling for?  
Answer:
4. Where is God's will to be done?  
Answer:

### **Paragraph 7**

1. What do we agree to labor for?
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
2. Who is it that is to sanctify us wholly?  
Answer:
3. Who is it that is to preserve us blameless?  
Answer:
4. How long are we to be preserved blameless?  
Answer:

**The End**