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## *THE BY-LAWS OF FELLOWSHIP ATLANTIC*

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### **1. NAME**

The name of this society is “Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches Atlantic Region.”

### **2. DEFINITIONS**

“Fellowship Atlantic” is the usual nomenclature for this society and is used throughout.

“Society” means Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches Atlantic Region.

“Special Resolution” means a resolution passed by not less than 75% of such members entitled to vote that are present in person at a general meeting of which notice specifying the intention to propose the resolution as a meeting resolution has been duly given.

“Delegate(s)” means those eligible to vote as representatives of the member churches.

“Regional Council” means the governing body of Fellowship Atlantic and consists of the official Directors, listed annually with the Registry of Joint Stocks of Nova Scotia. The Regional Council functions as the Board of Directors for this charity.

“Regional Director” means a co-ordinator of the society, hired by the Regional Council, which determines his duties, responsibilities, and remuneration on behalf of the society.

### **3. AFFIRMATION OF FAITH.** Originally adopted by the FEBCC at its organizational Convention, October 21, 1953 (with subsequent changes over the years).

3A. Bible. We believe the Bible to be the complete Word of God; that the sixty-six books, as originally written, comprising the Old and New Testaments were verbally inspired by the Spirit of God and were entirely free from error; that the Bible is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice, and the true basis of Christian union.

3B. God. We believe in one God, creator of all, holy, sovereign, eternal, existing in three equal Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

3C. Christ. We believe in the absolute deity of Jesus Christ, in His eternal existence with the Father in pre-incarnate glory, in His virgin birth, sinless life, substitutionary death, bodily resurrection, triumphant ascension, mediatorial ministry, and personal return.

3D. The Holy Spirit. We believe in the absolute and essential deity and personality of the Holy Spirit, Who convinces of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement; Who regenerates, sanctifies, illuminates, and comforts those who believe in Jesus Christ.

3E. Satan. We believe that Satan exists as an evil personality, the originator of sin, and the archenemy of God and man.

3F. Man. We believe that man was divinely created in the image of God; that he sinned, becoming guilty before God, resulting in total depravity, thereby incurring physical and spiritual death.

3G. Salvation. We believe that salvation is by the sovereign, electing grace of God; that by the appointment of the Father, Christ voluntarily suffered a vicarious, expiatory and propitiatory death: that justification is by faith alone in the all-sufficient sacrifice and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that those whom God has effectually called shall be divinely preserved and finally perfected in the image of the Lord.

3H. Future Things. We believe in the personal, bodily, and glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the bodily resurrection of the just and unjust; in the eternal blessedness of the redeemed, and in the judgement and conscious, eternal punishment of the wicked.

3I. The Local Church. We believe that a church is a company of immersed believers, called out from the world, separated unto the Lord Jesus, voluntarily associated for the ministry of the Word, the mutual edification of its members, the propagation of the faith and the observance of the ordinances. We believe it is a sovereign, independent body, exercising its own divinely awarded gifts, precepts, and privileges under the Lordship of Christ, the great Head of the Church. We believe that its officers are pastors and deacons. In the NT the office of pastor / elder / overseer is for the oversight of the doctrine and practice of the church. In the local churches of Fellowship Atlantic this gender specific office is for qualified men only.

3J. Ordinances. We believe that there are only two ordinances for the church regularly observed in the New Testament in the following order:

- i) Baptism which is the immersion of the believer in water, whereby he obeys Christ's command and sets forth his identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection.
- ii) The Lord's Supper which is the memorial wherein the believer partakes of the two elements, bread and wine, which symbolize the Lord's body and shed blood, proclaiming His death until He comes.

3K. The Church and State. We believe in the entire separation of church and state.

3L. Religious Liberty. We believe in religious liberty; that every man has the right to practice and propagate his beliefs.

3M. The Lord's Day. We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's day and that, in a special sense, it is the divinely appointed day for worship and spiritual exercise.

3N. Civil Government. We believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interest and good order of society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed, except only in the things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience and Prince of the kings of the earth.

## 6. IDENTITY AND MISSION STATEMENT

Fellowship Atlantic is an association of churches that exists to provide its member churches with the encouragement, resources, and opportunities they need to fulfil our cooperative missional objectives: healthy growth, church multiplication, and leadership development.

We are commanded to be committed to evangelism and discipleship and we recognize that through fellowship with one another in this mission we are both encouraged and protected to do what Jesus commanded.

(Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 12: 30-31, 2 Tim 2:2, Hebrews 10:23-25, Colossians 3:16)

## 5. MEMBERSHIP, RECOGNITION AND REPRESENTATION

### 5.A. Membership.

- 1) Fellowship Atlantic, as a corporate body, is constituted of duly recognized Baptist churches in Atlantic Canada which subscribe without reservation to the Affirmation of Faith contained in the Bylaws, which practice biblical principles of church government as described in the Affirmation of Faith, and which cooperate in the pursuit of the mission set out in Bylaw # 4.
- 2) Fellowship Atlantic, at an Annual or Special Convention, will consist of delegates of its member churches.

### 5.B. Recognition and Admission of Churches.

- 1) Churches wishing to join Fellowship Atlantic shall apply to the Regional Council. They must meet criteria approved by the Regional Council, which will include acceptance of the Regional and National Affirmation of Faith and Bylaws.

- 2) The Regional Council will convene a Recognition Council (in accordance with Recognition Council Procedural documents) which will meet with the applying church body to examine them based on these criteria and make a recommendation to the Regional Council.
- 3) The Regional Council, at the subsequent Regional Convention, will present a list of churches which have met such criteria to the delegates of its member churches for a vote of approval for membership. Acceptance by a Regional Convention leads automatically to membership with the national Fellowship, with recognition at the next National Convention.
- 4) Every member church must be a member of both National and Regional bodies.

#### 5.C. Cessation of Membership.

- 1) A church may withdraw from Fellowship Atlantic at its own request.
- 2) Any member church which is known to be no longer in agreement with the Bylaws of Fellowship Atlantic which contain our Affirmation of Faith, and has not voluntarily withdrawn itself, may, upon satisfactory evidence of disagreement being presented to the Regional Council, be removed from the membership by a majority vote at the next Regional Convention.
- 3) The Regional Council may recommend removal of a church to the Regional Convention. Such an action would be deemed appropriate if the church is no longer in agreement with the Bylaws and affirmation of faith and if subsequent attempts to reconcile have been unsuccessful. The decision to remove a member church shall be made by majority vote at the next Regional Convention.
- 4) Should a church lapse into a state of non-participation, consistently absenting itself from meaningful contact, and failing to support the cooperative missional objectives of Fellowship Atlantic, significant effort shall be made to reengage the church through contact with its leadership. Should these attempts fail to bring about a satisfactory renewal of the relationship, this shall constitute grounds for removal from Fellowship Atlantic. Removal shall be by a majority vote at a Regional Convention with at least thirty (30) days advance notice being given.
- 5) Cessation of membership at the Regional level automatically leads to cessation of membership at the national level.

## 6. CONVENTIONS

- 6.A. Annual Conventions. A convention of Fellowship Atlantic will be held annually for the ministry of the Word, the receiving of reports, the transaction of business and elections, and the sharing of ideas and resources to help our churches fulfill their

mission. The time and place of the Annual Convention will be decided by the Convention or Regional Council.

- 6.B. Special Conventions. Special Conventions of Fellowship Atlantic may be called by Regional Council or will be called at the written request of forty percent (40%) of the churches of Fellowship Atlantic.
- 6.C. Notice of Conventions. Notice of regular and special conventions will be sent to the member churches at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of the meeting. The purpose of a Special Convention will be clearly stated in the notice. The mode of communicating with the member churches may be by regular mail or email.
- 6.D. Representation. Each church in Fellowship Atlantic will be entitled to send four (4) delegates for the first fifty (50) members or fraction thereof; one (1) additional delegate for each additional fifty (50) members. Delegates must have a delegate form signed by the board chair or church clerk or equivalent official of the church. All delegates must be members in good standing of the church they represent and must be present in person in order to vote.
- 6.E. Credentials. The host church of the Convention will provide a Registration Team which will accept delegate forms, assisted by the Secretary of the Regional Council. Delegates desiring to vote at the Convention will present their delegate form to this Registration Team for approval. Any appeal of the Registration Team's ruling will be referred to the Convention.
- 6.F. Cancellation of Convention. In the event of an emergency preventing a meeting of the Annual Convention, the Regional Council shall, as soon as possible, re-schedule the event.
- 6.G. Auditors. Two (2) auditors will be appointed by the Convention for the ensuing year. If two candidates are not available, convention gives the responsibility to appoint auditors to the Regional Council. The financial records of Fellowship Atlantic shall be audited every year and this shall occur prior to the Annual Convention. The treasurer shall keep the books. The financial records shall be available to members for inspection upon request.
- 6.H. Quorums. No business shall be transacted at any meeting unless a quorum of members is present at the commencement of such business. A quorum of Regional Council shall be three (3) of the Directors present. A quorum of an Annual Convention (annual general meeting) or a Special Convention shall be forty (40) per cent of the member churches represented by their delegates.

## 7. COUNCIL

7.A. Composition. The Regional Council shall consist of a President, plus 4 or more other members elected by Convention. Out of these, Regional Council will appoint a Vice President and a Secretary. Fellowship Atlantic only provides remuneration for Regional Council's documented travel expenses.

7.B. Authority.

- 1) The Regional Council will have full authority for the supervision and coordination of the entire mission of Fellowship Atlantic.
- 2) The Regional Council will be the final authority in matters of business and in interpretation of Bylaws between Annual and/or Special Conventions.
- 3) The Regional Council will make full reports and recommendations concerning its work and be fully accountable to the Convention.

7.C. Responsibility.

- 1) The Regional Council will constitute the policy-making Board ***of Directors*** of Fellowship Atlantic, and will be responsible to administer all ministry activities, business affairs of Fellowship Atlantic, and to ensure that the mission as per Bylaw 4 of Fellowship Atlantic is fulfilled.
- 2) The Regional Council will, whenever possible, retain a Regional Director to oversee the ministry and mission of the Region.
- 3) The Regional Council will appoint Offices for the Region
- 4) The Regional Council shall meet at least three (3) times annually. The president shall create the agenda, which may be communicated by email. The Regional Director shall attend Regional Council meetings and may give input, but cannot vote, is not one of the members of the Regional Council, and shall not be counted as part of a quorum.

7.D. Designation of Officers. The Officers of Fellowship Atlantic will be President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The President will be elected by Convention; the Vice President and Secretary will be appointed from those elected to Regional Council.

7.E. Duties of Officers

- 1) President. The President will preside ***as chair*** at all business meetings of Fellowship Atlantic and of the Regional Council. He will perform such other duties as usually pertain to his office. The President will usually act as Chair of the meetings; in his absence, the Vice President shall be the Chair. In the case where both the President

and Vice President are absent, someone shall be appointed from among the Directors as the Chair.

- 2) Vice President. The Vice President will assist the President as he directs, and will perform the duties of the President in his absence or inability to serve.
- 3) Secretary. The Secretary shall attend all Regional Council meetings as is humanly possible, record the minutes of all such meetings, and provide a copy to each member of the Regional Council. The Secretary shall present the minutes of the previous meeting(s) for approval to the Regional Council. Correspondence shall be the responsibility of the Secretary under the direction of the Regional Council. Records of minutes shall be kept in an orderly manner.
- 4) Treasurer. The Treasurer, subject to such restrictions and directions as may be prescribed by the Regional Council, will receive, disburse, and account for all funds of the Region, and will perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Regional Council.

#### 7.F Finances and Seal

- 1) Exercise of borrowing power. Fellowship Atlantic usually has no authority to borrow money; however, in the case that a request is made, it may only be exercised after a special resolution of the members at an Annual Convention or Special Convention.
- 2) Contracts, Deeds, Bills of Exchange, etc. Contracts, deeds, bills of exchange, and other instruments and documents shall be executed by the President of Fellowship Atlantic only after approval by the Regional Council on behalf of the member churches. The Regional Director may act as representative of the Regional Council upon their request.
- 3) Seal of the Charity. Fellowship Atlantic does not have a corporate seal.
- 4) Conflict of Interest. In the case that a conflict of interest occurs for a Director of Fellowship Atlantic it must be declared upon realization of such a conflict. A Director may continue serving provided he withdraws from the decision-making of matters pertaining to that interest. Such withdrawal shall be recorded in the minutes.

## 8. ELECTIONS

### 8.A. Nominating Committee

- 1) A Nominating Committee of three (3) will be elected at each Annual Convention and will be charged with the responsibility of bringing in nominations at the next Annual Convention. The Nominating Committee will consist of one (1) member of the Regional Council and any two (2) members of our regional churches. The Nominating Committee, through its chair, will present the names of those nominated for all offices of Fellowship Atlantic. Additional nominees for all offices may be made from the floor, provided such nominees have been contacted previously and have agreed to allow their names to stand.
- 2) A copy of the report of the Nominating Committee, insofar as it has been completed, will be sent to the Regional Director to be distributed to the churches.
- 3) Any member in good standing of a church in Fellowship Atlantic will be eligible for nomination, except full-time or part-time employees of the Region. The nominating committee, in consultation with the Regional Council, shall seek to ensure the involvement of people from our churches and it is not restricted to those serving as pastors.

#### 8.B. Terms of Office

- 1) The normal term of office for a Regional Council member is three (3) years.
- 2) In the event that an elected official will be prevented from fulfilling a term of office, the Regional Council will have the option of filling the vacancy until the next Annual Convention.
- 3) Any removal of an elected official will be done by the appropriate body after consultation with the individual, their local church and the Regional Council.

### **9. BYLAWS**

Bylaws may be adopted by Fellowship Atlantic as required to carry on its ministries and business affairs. Such Bylaws may define responsibilities of the Regional Council, Officers of Fellowship Atlantic, relationships, procedures for election, and such other matters consistent with incorporation.

### **10. BYLAW AMENDMENTS**

Notice of amendments to these Bylaws will be given in writing to the Regional Council at least sixty (60) days prior to the date of the Annual or Special Convention and will be included in the Notice of Convention sent to the member churches. As a general procedure, such amendments will be stated so as to permit modification by the Convention. Such a notice of amendment may be made by any five members in good standing of a church or churches within Fellowship Atlantic. Amendments to these bylaws may only be made by special resolution, passed by not less than 75% of the voting members of Fellowship Atlantic, presented and passed during an annual Convention.