

# THE CONSTITUTION OF THE FELLOWSHIP OF CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES (NSW)

## 1. PREAMBLE

With humble thanks to Almighty God for creation and the gift of salvation through Christ Jesus; and believing that the tasks of the church are the evangelisation of the world and the edification of the saints; and also believing that there is a need for a fellowship of evangelical Congregational churches of historic Biblical conviction to assist each other in the above tasks, the churches of the Fellowship, in 1977 when the Uniting Church in Australia was formed, elected to continue in a Congregational order, polity and heritage dating back to the Reformers and the Puritans, with emphasis on the Lordship of Jesus Christ; the absolute authority and veracity of the Scriptures and the autonomy of the local churches.

## 2. FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

The Fellowship is founded upon the recognition of general tenets and doctrines set forth in schedule 1 to the Fellowship of Congregational Churches (New South Wales) Incorporation Act and in particular upon the acceptance of the following principles:

### a. GENERAL TENETS

- i) the supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ, as Head of the Church;
- ii) the right of every church to maintain under Christ independence in the government and administration of its local affairs and accordingly the Assembly of the Fellowship shall not become a court of appeal;
- iii) the spiritual relationship between Christian churches of the same faith and order, and their responsibility to unite as one in federal action for denominational purposes.

### b. STATEMENT OF FAITH

#### THE LIVING GOD:

God is Almighty, Eternal and Unchanging. He is just and holy, gracious and merciful. He is the Creator and Ruler of all things, exercising sovereign power in Creation, Providence and Redemption and is deserving of all glory and praise forever.

#### THE TRINITY:

God is One, existing through all eternity in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

#### THE WORD OF GOD:

God's greatness and holiness are such, that without His aid, man can neither understand God nor find the way to a right relationship with Him. In His mercy, however, God has made Himself known. He has done this partially through Creation but more fully and clearly to the people of Israel and explicitly and finally in Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God and the Word of God incarnate. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as originally given and divinely preserved record, interpret and complete God's special revelation to us. We therefore accept the Bible as not merely containing but being the divinely inspired and infallible Word of God written and the final and sufficient authority in all matters of Christian faith and life.

#### SATAN:

Satan is a person, a malignant spirit, the enemy of Jesus Christ and of the saints, deceiving mankind; and he has been condemned to eternal damnation.

#### MAN THE SINNER:

God created man perfect but, after being tempted by Satan man, by his own free choice, disobeyed God and became a sinner. Man's whole nature is now corrupted by sin and his fellowship with God is broken.

#### JESUS THE SAVIOUR:

God alone can deal with man's sin and bring about reconciliation to Himself. In God's great plan of Redemption, God the Son became man through the Incarnation. Jesus Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He lived a sinless human life and taught with divine authority. He suffered and died in the place of sinners, bearing their sin and its guilt and punishment. He thus sets free all believers from the domination of Satan and the corruption of their own sinful nature, and removes from them forever sin's lasting consequences.

**GRACE OF GOD:**

God, by His Grace, forgives and reconciles to Himself all who turn to Him in true repentance, turning from sin and trusting in Christ's atoning death. God imputes to them the righteousness of Christ Himself and adopts them as His children.

**THE RISEN LORD:**

The Lord Jesus Christ was shown to be the Son of God by His teaching, by His miracles and by His bodily resurrection from the dead. He has ascended in power and glory to the presence of God where He now pleads on behalf of those who call upon Him in truth.

**THE HOLY SPIRIT:**

God in the Person of the Holy Spirit must work in a man before he can enter Salvation. He leads the sinner into an awareness of his sinfulness and brings him to repentance and trust in Christ. He brings to birth in him a new and eternal life, and by His continuing work, develops in this new life the fruits of love and holiness.

**JUSTIFICATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH ALONE:**

The Scriptures affirm that the sinner is justified by faith alone in the finished work of Christ, that is, by His substitutionary death upon the Cross and His resurrection from the dead. The works of men and the traditions of the visible Church are of no avail in the Salvation and Justification of men.

**THE VISIBLE RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST:**

God is bringing all human history to a climax which will be marked by the personal bodily return to the earth of the Lord Jesus Christ in power and glory.

**JESUS THE JUDGE:**

God has appointed Jesus as Judge and there will be a final judgement. Those who are saved will be raised in a glorified body and enjoy eternally and to the full the presence of their Lord in heaven. Those who have rejected Christ will also be raised and banished from God forever in hell.

**THE ONE CHURCH:**

All who have been personally redeemed with the precious Blood of Christ and upon whom God has bestowed His righteousness as a free gift, belong to Christ. They alone may rightly be called Christians. They alone are members of the one universal and eternal Church, which is the Body of Christ.

**THE GATHERED CHURCH:**

Each local church is a fellowship of believers gathered by Christ and under His sole, sufficient and supreme authority. Through Him, as Head of the Church, it has direct access to God and enjoys fellowship with other congregations of His people in a unity which transcends all barriers.

**SPIRITUAL GIFTS:**

The Holy Spirit gives many different gifts to equip all God's people for ministry, in order to build up the Body of Christ, and He determines what is given to each believer. A gift is to be valued in the Church according to its contribution to the common good.

**THE CHRISTIAN LIFE:**

Every Christian is called to love the Lord his God with all his heart, soul, mind and strength; and to love his neighbour as himself. Therefore, all are to live godly lives, doing all things to the glory of God. The indwelling Holy Spirit makes this new life a reality as they yield themselves to Him.

### **THE SACRAMENTS:**

Baptism is a sacrament ordained by Jesus Christ as a sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace. Where one who confesses faith in Christ is baptised, the sacrament is seen as an outward and visible sign of newness of life through faith in Christ on the part of the candidate.

OR

Where an infant of confessing parents is baptised, the sacrament is seen as an outward and visible sign of the Grace of God that works in the life prior to the response of faith, calling the one baptised to grow up into Christ and put on Christ.

The Lord's Supper is a sacrament ordained by Jesus Christ and is to be observed in the churches for a perpetual remembrance and showing forth of the sacrifice of Christ, the spiritual nourishment of believers and a sign of their communion with one another.

### **THE GREAT COMMISSION:**

We affirm the obligation to fulfil the Commission given to the Church by our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, to proclaim the Gospel and make disciples of all nations.

## **3. OBJECTS**

The Fellowship of Congregational Churches has been called into being to the glory of God the Father, the proclamation of the Gospel to the Lord Jesus Christ, and the making of disciples who, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, worship and witness in and through their local church. The objects of the Fellowship shall be to uphold, extend and advance the Christian faith primarily through Churches of the Congregational Order and for these purposes:

- a) Promote the Kingdom of God through the principles of the Congregational Church Fellowship and government and extend the influence of Congregationalism;
- b) Encourage Churches in faithful Biblical worship and witness;
- c) Cultivate, maintain and strengthen fraternal relations between Congregational Churches, institutions and societies of the Congregational Way and to promote and facilitate co-operation in everything affecting their common interest;
- d) Co-ordinate, foster and extend the life and work of missionary enterprise in all its aspects, both in Australia and overseas;
- e) Co-ordinate, foster and extend Christian education in all its aspects;
- f) Meet and relieve human want and suffering through charitable and other services;
- g) Instruct children and adults and promote such other religious and philanthropic purposes as the Fellowship may direct;
- h) Promote Church extension and to aid in adequate maintenance of the Ministry;
- i) Ascertain, formulate and publish the general opinion of Congregationalists on questions of public importance;
- j) Print, publish, issue, purchase, sell, distribute, and/or circulate such papers, periodicals, books, circulars, leaflets and other literary matter as may seem conducive to any of the objects of the Fellowship;
- k) Purchase, lease, or otherwise acquire any real or personal property and to sell, lease, exchange, mortgage, pledge, or otherwise deal with any real or personal property now belonging to or which may hereafter be acquired by the Fellowship and to construct, maintain, and alter or demolish any buildings or works necessary or convenient for the purpose of the Fellowship.

- l) Administer in accordance with the provisions of the respective trusts, the trust funds now held by the Fellowship and to establish and administer additional trust funds for such purposes as the Assembly may from time to time determine;
- m) Acquire sites for Church, manse and other buildings and to make loans to churches for property and equipment purposes;
- n) Create funds for the purpose of supplementing, where necessary, stipends of accredited ministers of the Fellowship;
- o) Co-operate and engage in joint work with other Christian bodies where we deem appropriate;
- p) Do all such things as may appear to be incidental or conducive to the attainment of the Objects of the Fellowship or any of them.

#### **4. THE ASSEMBLY**

1. There shall be an Assembly of the Fellowship consisting of the following members of Congregational Churches which are affiliated with the Fellowship:
  - a) Delegates from affiliated churches;
  - b) Accredited Ministers;
  - c) Current Officers; (see clause 7) and sub-committee Chairmen;
  - d) Such other persons or representatives as may be described in the By-Laws.
2. Individuals may be recognised in the following manner:
  - a) Associate – not able to vote but able to speak.
  - b) Observer – not able to vote or speak.
3. Each of the affiliated churches shall be represented by delegates elected according to the following scale: 30 members or under, 2 delegates and an additional delegate for every 20 members or part thereof above the first 30.

#### **5. MEETINGS**

1. The Annual Assembly shall be held each year in the months of September, October and/or November, and the place and time of such Assembly shall be determined by the Executive Committee. A half yearly Assembly may be held in the months of April and/or May if the Executive Committee considers it necessary, giving 60 days' notice thereof in writing to each affiliated church.
2. a) A Special Assembly may be convened by the Executive Committee at any time by giving 60 days' notice thereof in writing to each affiliated church and to each member of the Assembly, stating the business to be dealt with at such Assembly.
  - b) A Special Assembly shall be similarly convened by the Executive Committee upon request from not less than 30% of affiliated churches.
  - c) No business other than that specified shall be dealt with at a Special Assembly.
3. One third of delegates of an Assembly representing 50% of affiliated churches at the date of the meeting shall constitute a quorum for any Assembly meeting.
4. All elections shall be by secret ballot after nomination. Nominations shall be made by churches in writing to the Returning Officer.
  - a) Informal meetings
    1. Where in the opinion of the Executive Committee extraordinary circumstances (such as a pandemic, war or natural disaster) make the convening of meetings in accordance with the other clauses of this section impracticable or where the President, General Secretary or another member of the Executive Committee for the time being discharging the duties of the President

or General Secretary is of opinion that circumstances of grave urgency preclude the convening of such meetings, the Executive Committee may convene an Assembly by any means (including but not limited to audio-visual communication, post, telephone, email or other telecommunication or a combination of any of those means) determined by the Executive Committee to be suitable to ascertain the views and, where necessary, determine the votes of affiliated churches.

2. It does not matter whether the means selected by the Executive Committee enable the simultaneous participation of all delegates providing that, wherever practical, before the final determination of any vote, all delegates have reasonable opportunity to express their wishes.
3. Where an Assembly is convened in accordance with sub-clause (1), the Executive Committee may also vary any procedures prescribed by this Constitution or the By-laws, including procedures for the election of members of committees and officers but, subject to such variation, those provisions shall continue to apply as nearly as practical to the business of the Assembly.

5. Minutes of Assemblies shall be confirmed as soon as practicable by an Executive Committee meeting. The Assembly shall authorise the Executive to sign Assembly meeting Minutes providing that all affiliated churches have had the opportunity to peruse such Minutes for a period of sixty days.

## **6. LEGAL INTERPRETATIONS AND OPINIONS FOR ASSEMBLIES**

- a) The Chairman shall be authorised, if deemed necessary, to defer discussion if legal interpretation is considered necessary or desirable.
- b) If a legal opinion is required on any agenda item prior to or during the Assembly, the Chairman shall make authorisation for an opinion to be sought on behalf of the Fellowship. Such opinion being received by the Assembly only if both the brief and the legal reply are tabled in writing.
- c) Should a Delegate wish to offer an independent legal opinion it will only be received by the Assembly if both the brief and the legal reply are submitted in writing.

## **7. OFFICERS**

1. The officers of the Fellowship shall be the President, Immediate Past President, General Secretary, a Registrar, a Treasurer, and such other persons as may be prescribed in the By-Laws.
2. The President shall be Chairman of all meetings of the Executive Committee and Assemblies and generally see to the carrying out of the provisions of the Act of Incorporation and the By-Laws of the Fellowship. The Immediate Past President shall, in the absence of the President, act for him.
3. The General Secretary, for the purpose of this Constitution, shall mean the Ministerial Secretary as outlined in the Act of Incorporation of the Fellowship of Congregational Churches, New South Wales, No. 39.
4. Each officer shall be elected or appointed in such a manner as may be provided in the By-Laws.
5. The President and General Secretary shall be ex-officio members of all committees of the Fellowship excluding those to which they have been elected or appointed by virtue of their office. Voting rights shall be limited to those committees to which they have been elected in the normal way or appointed with voting rights.
6. If an election of any officer shall not take place in accordance with the By-Laws, or if any officer (other than the General Secretary) shall die or resign, or if the Executive Committee shall by resolution declare that any such officer has become incapacitated or unfit for the duties of his office, the vacancy so caused shall be filled by the Executive Committee in such a manner as may be prescribed in By-Laws.
7. The Executive Committee may at any time and from time to time, for such period or periods and in such manner as it thinks fit, appoint an acting officer to fill any office, including that of General Secretary

and such appointee shall be deemed, for the time being, to be the holder of the office in respect of which he has been appointed. The period of appointment shall not extend beyond the conclusion of the ensuing Annual Assembly.

8. Before a person shall be eligible for any position in the Fellowship, whether by election or appointment, he or she shall subscribe to the Statement of Faith and the Constitution and be a member of an affiliated church.

## **8. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

1. The affairs of the Fellowship shall be managed and controlled by the Executive Committee subject to the direction and control of any Assembly. The Executive Committee shall be constituted as follows:

- a) The Officers of the Fellowship being the President, Immediate Past President, Treasurer, Registrar and General Secretary.
- b) 12 members from affiliated churches with no more than three representatives from any one church (exclusive of the President, Immediate Past President, Treasurer, Registrar and General Secretary).

2. The Executive Committee may act notwithstanding the non-appointment or non-election of any officers and notwithstanding any vacancy in the membership of the Committee providing a quorum is present.

3. The members of the Executive Committee who are elected by the Annual Assembly shall commence to hold office at the conclusion of the Assembly at which they were elected and shall continue to hold office until their successors take office.

4. The Executive Committee shall declare vacant the seat of any member elected in accordance with Clause (3) hereof who is absent without leave from the regular meetings of the Committee for more than three successive meetings.

5. The Executive Committee may fill any vacancy in the membership of the Committee which may in respect of members elected in accordance with Clause (3) hereof occur between Annual Assemblies.

6. The Executive Committee shall make a report of its work and proceedings to each Annual Assembly and attend to all matters referred to it by an Assembly.

7. Subject to Schedule 3 of the Act of Incorporation, the Executive Committee in determining matters affecting property vested in the Fellowship, whether absolutely or as Trustees, shall have regard to the interests of the denomination as a whole and to the intention of the original donors of any land or of the contribution to any fund.

## **9. SUB-COMMITTEES**

1. The General Secretary shall convene and, where reasonably possible, the President preside at the first meeting of every sub-committee until a chairman is appointed. If the President cannot attend, the sub-committee shall, as their first item of business, elect a chairman.

2. Each sub-committee shall elect its own officers.

3. If any elected member absents himself from three consecutive meetings of a sub-committee without special leave of absence he shall thereupon cease to be a member of such committee.

4. Such further and other sub-committees may be established by by-laws or may be constituted by an Assembly or by the Executive Committee as may from time to time seem necessary or desirable.

5. a) At each Annual Assembly there shall be elected a Camp Fletcher Committee responsible for the administration and management of the Lionel B. Fletcher Memorial Christian Training Centre,

situated at Hazelbrook. This sub-committee to have its own bank account and to administer its own financial arrangements subject to Annual Audit by the Fellowship Auditor.

6. Ex Officio Members (excluding paid Officers of the Fellowship and subject to clause 7:5 'Officers') shall have full voting rights on all committees on which they are eligible to serve. Ex Officio Members shall not form part of a quorum.

## **10. AFFILIATION OF CHURCHES**

### **i) Applications:**

A Church desiring affiliation with the Fellowship shall make an application to the Executive Committee by:

- i) Satisfying the Executive Committee that a duly convened meeting of the Church was held and a ballot was decided in favour of affiliation; and
- ii) Supplying an application requesting affiliation signed by the Church Secretary, or other authorised officer of the Church on the vote of at least two-thirds of the membership; and
- iii) Satisfying the Executive Committee that the Church accepts the fundamental principles and objects of the Fellowship; and
- iv) Agreeing that the word 'Congregational' be placed in a prominent position wherever the name of the Church is used.

### **ii) Nominations & Affiliations:**

- i) The Executive Committee shall decide whether to nominate any church to the Assembly for affiliation.
- ii) Notice of nomination for affiliation shall be given by the General Secretary to the churches at least sixty days (60) before the Assembly meeting, and shall form part of the agenda for the next Assembly.
- iii) A church shall be affiliated by a vote of two-thirds majority of the Assembly.

### **iii) Appeal:**

Should the Executive Committee not nominate the church for affiliation, that church shall have the right to appeal to the Assembly in writing, outlining its reasons for requesting affiliation. Such appeal must be lodged with the General Secretary at least thirty (30) days before an Assembly, to be considered by the Assembly.

## **11. AFFILIATED GROUPS**

1. Other groups may be affiliated with the Fellowship from time to time as accepted by the Assembly. These could be groups such as the Fellowship of Congregational Women or Men, or regional Fellowship of Congregational Churches.
2. These groups must submit their Constitution and/or rules for ratification by the Assembly.
3. These affiliated groups would elect their own officers; but these officers would need to be ratified at each Annual Assembly.
4. These groups would be invited and encouraged to present an annual report for distribution in the Delegates Handbook for each Annual Assembly.

### **11a. DISAFFILIATION**

1. An affiliated church or group may be disaffiliated by resolution of the Assembly passed by a two-thirds majority on motion notice of which has been circulated to affiliated churches and members of Assembly at least 60 days before the Assembly at which the matter is to be dealt with.

2. An affiliated church or group may seek voluntary disaffiliation by written notice to the General Secretary, who is to announce the application at the next Assembly. Applications for voluntary disaffiliation may be withdrawn at any time up until the commencement of the Assembly. Voluntary disaffiliation takes effect when the General Secretary announces to Assembly that the application has been received.

## 12. INTERPRETATION

In the interpretation of this Constitution unless the context otherwise requires the following words shall have the following meanings:

“Accredited Ministers” shall mean the following members of affiliated churches:

Ordained ministers or inducted pastors who are:

(a) in full standing with the Fellowship; and

(b) either:

(i) currently serving as ordained ministers or inducted pastors in an affiliated church; **or**

(ii) not so serving only by reason of ill health or permanent retirement from ministry and other remunerated activity.

“Associate” shall include the following members of affiliated churches:

(a) students accepted by the Executive Committee as undertaking formal studies with a view to becoming accredited ministers or inducted pastors of affiliated churches;

(b) missionaries accepted by the Executive Committee for support by the Fellowship; and

(c) ordained ministers or inducted pastors who have previously served as such in affiliated churches but do not now fall within the definition of ‘accredited ministers.’

“Act” means the Fellowship of Congregational Churches (NSW) Act 1977, No. 39.

“Affiliated Church” means one that:

a) Became an affiliated church under the Transitional Processes (Schedule 4) of the Act of Incorporation, **or**

b) affiliates with the Fellowship after the ‘appointed day’ (as defined in the Act) in accordance with this Constitution but does not include a church which has been disaffiliated.

“Assembly” means an Annual Assembly, Half-yearly Assembly or Special Assembly convened in accordance with this Constitution and the By-laws.

“Ballot” means secret ballot.

“Camp Committee” means the Camp Fletcher committee.

“Executive Committee” shall mean the Committee of the Assembly referred to in the Act.

“Fellowship” means the Fellowship of Congregational Churches.

“FCC” means the Fellowship of Congregational Churches.

“Membership” for the purpose of determining representation in accordance with this Constitution shall be the number of active members of a Church or approved group of Churches as shown in the Year Book of the Fellowship for the relevant year.

“Members of the Assembly” shall mean the persons who for the time being are entitled under Clause 4 of this Constitution to constitute an Assembly.

“Special Assembly” means an extraordinary meeting of the Assembly called in accordance with the Constitution.

## 13. BY-LAWS AND STANDING ORDERS



1. a) By-laws for the regulation of the affairs of the Fellowship and Standing Orders relating procedure at meetings may, from time to time be made, amended or repealed by any Assembly provided that the same are not inconsistent with this Constitution.
  - b) The Standing Orders shall be applicable to all Assembly meetings and Committee meetings and, as far as appropriate, to meetings of sub-committees, and shall be construed subject to the Constitution.
  - c) Such By-laws may provide that matters which, in regard to election, are authorized by this Constitution to be prescribed by By-laws, may be determined by the chairman or by the Assembly.
2. a) Notice of the substance of any proposed By-Law or Standing Order or amendment or repeal thereof shall be given in writing to the office of the General Secretary at least 90 days prior to the Assembly where the matter is to be dealt with.
  - b) The office of the General Secretary shall provide for the communication of such notice to each affiliated Church and to members of the Assembly.
3. No resolution for the adoption of a proposed By-Law or Standing Order or the amendment or repeal thereof shall be declared to have been passed unless it be carried by a majority of at least two-thirds of the members of the Assembly present and voting thereon.

#### **14. INDEMNITY**

Every Executive Committee member and every member of any sub-committee, and affiliated group, and any person (whether an officer of the Fellowship or not) employed or engaged by the Fellowship or such sub-committee or group in its work shall be indemnified against any liability incurred by him or her when acting in good faith as such and the costs of defending any civil or (if acquitted) criminal proceedings which have arisen in connection with his or her activity as such and which he or she has been authorised by the Executive Committee to defend.

#### **15. ALTERATIONS OF CONSTITUTION, BY-LAWS AND STANDING ORDERS**

1. Any Assembly may amend, alter, repeal or replace the Constitution, By-Laws and Standing Orders provided that:
  - a) Every affiliated church shall be given notice in writing of the proposed amendment, alteration, repeal or replacement at least 60 days beforehand; and
  - b) The resolution of the Assembly shall have been carried by a two-thirds majority of the members of that Assembly present and voting thereon.
2. Notice of the substance of any proposed amendment or repeal shall be given in writing to the office of the General Secretary at least 90 days prior to the Assembly where the matter is to be dealt with.
3. The office of the General Secretary shall provide for the communication of such notice to each affiliated Church and to members of the Assembly as early as practicable and not less than 60 days prior to the Assembly where the matter is to be dealt with.
4. No resolution for the amendment or repeal of the Constitution shall be declared to have been passed unless it be carried by a majority of at least two-thirds of the members of the Assembly present and voting thereon.
5. In so far as the same are not inconsistent with our Constitution and By-Laws, the Constitution and By-Laws which regulated the affairs of the Congregational Union of N.S.W. immediately prior to 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1977 shall "Mutatis Mutandis" apply to regulate the affairs of the Fellowship of Congregational Churches.



# GENERAL BY-LAWS OF THE FELLOWSHIP OF CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES (NSW)

## **BY-LAW I: DELEGATES AND REPRESENTATIVES TO ASSEMBLY**

1. The delegates to Assemblies from an affiliated church or group of churches, as provided for in Clause 4 of the Constitution shall be appointed each year by such church or group of churches at a duly constituted meeting, and the names and addresses of such delegates shall be forwarded to the office of the General Secretary so as to reach him not later than 31<sup>st</sup> day of August in that year, or 31<sup>st</sup> day of July if the Annual Assembly is to be held in September. Delegates shall remain appointed until the annual appointment of delegates by the churches subject to sub clause (3) hereof.
2. It is the privilege and responsibility of the local church to appoint its delegates to the Assembly, and to appoint new delegates as vacancies occur. A church may also appoint alternate delegates.
3. No person shall be appointed as a delegate unless he or she is a member of a church which is affiliated with the Fellowship.
4. Other persons may for a particular reason be associated with the Assembly at its discretion by a vote of at least two-thirds of those present and voting.

## **BY-LAW II: RETURNING OFFICER AND SCRUTINEERS**

- 1.a) For the purpose of conducting ballots at Assemblies, the Executive Committee shall, on or before the 31<sup>st</sup> day of May in each year, appoint a person as Returning Officer.
- b) In default of such appointment or if the person so appointed shall die, resign, or become unable, unwilling or ineligible to act, the President of the Fellowship shall appoint a Returning Officer.
2. The Ballots at the succeeding Annual Assembly, Half Yearly and Special Assemblies shall be conducted by such Returning Officer in accordance with these By-Laws.
3. The Chairman of the Assembly shall call for nominations of Scrutineers as he may from time to time think fit.

## **BY-LAW III: ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE FELLOWSHIP**

1. a) The President of the Fellowship shall occupy the office for one year and shall assume office at the conclusion of the Assembly at which the election takes place.
- b) Any person elected by the Assembly to the position of President shall be eligible for re-election.
2. a) Should a President not be elected to take up office in accordance with these By-Laws, the Assembly shall, on the recommendation of the Executive Committee, appoint a Chairman for the next Annual Assembly.
- b) Such Chairman shall also chair the Executive Committee and, in consultation with that Committee, ensure that all the duties resting on the position of President are undertaken.
- c) Any person appointed by the Assembly to the position of Chairman shall be eligible for re-appointment if necessary.
3. The President shall be elected or re-elected by ballot after nomination as hereinafter provided at the annual Assembly held immediately prior to the term office is due to be assumed or re-assumed.
4. The office of the General Secretary shall notify each affiliated church not later than the thirtieth day of June each year that nominations may be made for the Office of President but the accidental omission to give notice to or the non-receipt of any such notice by any church shall not invalidate an election.

5. Any affiliated church may, by resolution passed at a duly constituted church meeting, nominate an eligible person for the position of President.
6. Notice in writing of any such nomination shall be forwarded to the Returning Officer and such nomination to be effective must be received by the Returning Officer at his address on or before the 31<sup>st</sup> day of August or 31<sup>st</sup> day of July if the Annual Assembly is to be held in September and be accompanied by the written consent of the nominee.
7. The Returning Officer shall notify the Executive Committee at the first meeting after the 31<sup>st</sup> August or 31<sup>st</sup> day of July if the Annual Assembly is to be held in September, the names of the persons who have accepted nomination.
8. a) In the event of less than two eligible nominations being received from the churches the Executive Committee may nominate suitable persons in order for two nominations to be submitted.  
b) For such nominations to be effective the consent of the persons so nominated and their churches must be obtained prior to the opening of the ballot. It will be the responsibility of the Returning Officer to notify the nominees and their churches of their nomination and to request the consent in writing of the nominees with an endorsement by their church, to act if elected.
9. The ballot shall be opened from the commencement of business on the first day of the Assembly, and shall remain open until conclusion of business on that day or until such other time as shall be determined by the Chairman of the Assembly.
10. No person shall be declared elected unless he receives a majority of the votes cast and, if necessary, successive ballots shall be taken, the name of the person receiving the smallest number of votes on any ballot being deleted from the succeeding ballots until one nominee receives a majority.

#### **BY-LAW IV: ELECTION OF TREASURER AND REGISTRAR OF THE FELLOWSHIP**

1. At each Annual Assembly, a Treasurer and a Registrar shall be elected by ballot at such time or times as the Chairman may appoint. Each such officer shall assume office at the conclusion of the Assembly at which election takes place.
2. Nominations for such officers may be made by each affiliated church at a duly constituted meeting and/or by the Executive Committee.
3. If not more than one person be nominated for an office, the nomination shall be submitted to a ballot. (Voting, By-Law XII).
4. If more than one person be nominated for any office, a ballot shall be held for such office in accordance with By-Law X and shall be open during such time as the Chairman may appoint.
5. Notice in writing of any such nomination shall be forwarded to the Returning Officer and such nomination to be effective must be received by the Returning Officer at his address on or before the 31<sup>st</sup> day of August or 31<sup>st</sup> day of July if the Annual Assembly is to be held in September and be accompanied by the written consent of the nominee.
6. The Registrar and Treasurer shall be ex-officio members of the Finance & Property sub-committee.

#### **BY-LAW V: CASUAL VACANCIES**

1. If any casual vacancy shall occur, within the Executive Committee, the Executive Committee may fill the same by a ballot conducted at a duly constituted meeting thereof providing a quorum is present.
2. Any casual vacancy in any of the sub-committees may, unless otherwise provided by the Constitution or these By-Laws, be filled by the Executive Committee at a duly constituted meeting thereof.

3. A sub-committee may act notwithstanding any vacancy in the membership thereof providing a quorum is present.

### **BY-LAW VI: APPOINTMENT OF OTHER OFFICERS**

The Assembly may appoint, on nomination by the Executive Committee, such other officers as may from time to time be required, in the fields of Evangelism, Christian Education, Home and Overseas Missions and related areas. The terms of appointment of such officers shall be determined by the Assembly at the time the appointment is made. Such officers shall become members of the Committee or sub-committees relevant to their area of responsibility.

### **BY-LAW VII: ELECTION OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE ASSEMBLY**

1. Nominations of persons for election as members of the Committee of the Assembly (Executive Committee) may be made by each affiliated church by resolution passed at a duly constituted meeting.

2. Notice in writing of any such nomination shall be forwarded to the Returning Officer and such nomination to be effective must be received by the Returning Officer at his address on or before the 31<sup>st</sup> day of August or 31<sup>st</sup> day of July if the Annual Assembly is to be held in September and be accompanied by the written consent of the nominee.

3. The Returning Officer shall cause a list of the names of the nominees to be displayed in the place in which the Assembly is meeting for the dispatch of business and shall cause the same to be revised from time to time as necessary.

### **BY-LAW VIII: ELECTION OF SUB-COMMITTEES**

1. Nominations of persons for election as members of such sub-committees as the Fellowship may form may be made by each church by resolution passed at a duly constituted meeting. A sub-committee shall comprise of a minimum of five elected members and a maximum of eight elected members (excluding the Executive Committee and Camp Fletcher sub-committee). Where insufficient nominations are received to fill the full complement of a sub-committee, the General Secretary shall, within 14 days of the closing date of nominations, advise churches that they have the option of submitting additional nominations to these sub-committees by the 7<sup>th</sup> day before commencement of Assembly. If the minimum number is not elected to any sub-committee, the Executive Committee may appoint persons to allow the sub-committees to function.

2. Notice in writing of any such nomination shall be forwarded to the Returning Officer and such nomination to be effective must be received by the Returning Officer at his address on or before the 31<sup>st</sup> day of August or 31<sup>st</sup> day of July if the Annual Assembly is to be held in September and be accompanied by the written consent of the nominee. A list of nominations for all positions and sub-committees shall be forwarded to the churches within 14 days of normal closing of nominations.

### **BY-LAW IX: CAMPSITE**

#### **a) CAMP FLETCHER:**

The sub-committee of Camp Fletcher to comprise up to twelve (12) elected members, in addition to the President and General Secretary, one member of the Finance and Property Committee, one other member of the Executive Committee, the last four members to be ex-officio. The Camp Fletcher Treasurer to present a report or attend a meeting of the Finance & Property Committee once each quarter to present firsthand reports on the current financial position.

### **BY-LAW X: CONDUCT OF ELECTION FOR OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES**

1. a) No person shall be elected or continue to hold a position as an Officer of the Fellowship (other than the General Secretary or an Officer appointed under By-Law VI) or as a member of the Executive

Committee or any sub-committee, unless he or she is a member of a church which is affiliated with the Fellowship.

b) All nominations (except for the offices of President and General Secretary or an Officer under By-Law VI) must be submitted in writing signed, in the case of a church by the Secretary or other duly authorised officer, and accompanied by the written consent of the nominee, and shall be delivered to the Returning Officer not later than 31<sup>st</sup> day of August or 31<sup>st</sup> day of July if the Annual Assembly is to be held in September.

2. The Returning Officer shall, except where otherwise provided, cause ballot papers for the respective elections to be prepared in such form and containing such directions as he may determine and shall cause a ballot paper to be made available to every member of the Assembly who applies therefore at any time while the relevant ballot is open.

3. All ballots shall be conducted at such times as the Chairman may appoint.

a) In election of the Executive Committee and sub-committees the method of indicating for whom a vote is given shall be by placing a cross beside the name of a person for whom the vote is intended, but any ballot paper which plainly indicates the voter's intention shall be valid, provided that the voter votes for not more than the required number of candidates.

b) The prescribed number of persons who in elections obtain the highest number of votes shall be elected to the respective committees, provided that no person shall be deemed elected unless he has received a majority of the effective votes cast.

5. A delegate elected to represent more than one church shall only be entitled to one vote and not a vote for each church represented.

## **BY-LAW XI: ELECTION OF OFFICERS OF AFFILIATED GROUPS**

1. Affiliated groups will elect their own officers as needed and in line with their own rules, as approved by the FCC Assembly.

2. These officers will be elected at the groups nearest meeting prior to the Annual Assembly.

3. These officers will need to be ratified at the Annual Assembly each year.

4. Any changes to the Constitution and/or rules of the organisation must be ratified by the Assembly.

## **BY-LAW XII: VOTING**

1. As soon as practicable after the closing of a ballot, the Returning Officer shall inform the Chairman of the result thereof and the Chairman shall, when convenient, declare to the Assembly the name or names of the persons elected.

2. At all meetings of the Executive Committee and of other sub-committees the Chairman of the meeting shall not have a deliberative vote. In the case of an equality of votes on any question he shall have a casting vote.

3. All motions shall be determined by a majority vote where not otherwise stated in the Constitution, By-Laws and Standing Orders.

4. The result of Ballots shall be determined in relation to the number of votes cast and not on the number of those present and eligible to vote.

## **BY-LAW XIII: QUORUM**

Not less than 50% of elected members shall constitute a quorum of any committee.

## **BY-LAW XIV: APPOINTMENT OF GENERAL SECRETARY**

1. The General Secretary shall be appointed by the Assembly.
2. One nomination for the office of General Secretary shall be made to the Assembly by the Executive Committee.
3. The office of General Secretary shall be open to both ministerial and lay persons.
- 4.a) Should the Executive Committee propose the re-appointment of the General Secretary, the Executive Committee shall give notification to the churches six months prior to a re-appointment. Where re-appointment is not proposed each affiliated church shall be invited to recommend to the Executive Committee the name of a person for such position. Invitations for such recommendations shall be open for a period of three months. Such name/s shall be in the hands of the President two months prior to the constituting of the Assembly at which the appointment is to be made.
- b) The President shall bring the name/s to the next Executive meeting when a decision of one name for recommendation must be reached if at all possible. Churches must then be notified immediately following that decision, to have at least 30 days' notice before the Assembly.
5. Each appointment of a General Secretary to fill a vacant office shall be for an initial term which shall commence from such date as the Executive Committee may determine and shall conclude at the end of February, following the third Annual Assembly after the Assembly at which the appointment was made provided that:
  - a) Either the General Secretary or the Assembly may terminate such appointment on three months' notice.
  - b) The Executive Committee may extend such term to a date as it may determine, but not more than three months from the end of February.
6. The term of any re-appointment to the office of General Secretary shall be for a period as determined by the Assembly, but not more than three years, provided that:
  - a) Either the General Secretary or the Assembly may terminate such appointment on three months' notice.
  - b) The Executive Committee, where the General Secretary is not to be further re-appointed, may extend such term to a date as it may determine but not more than three months from the end of February as prescribed in By-Law XIV:5.
7. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for the review of the terms and conditions of the position of General Secretary, and submit a report to each Annual Assembly.
8. A casual vacancy occurring in the office of General Secretary may be filled by the Executive Committee at a meeting duly convened for that purpose and the person so appointed shall hold office until the next Annual, Special or Half Yearly Assembly.
9. All voting shall be by secret ballot of the members of the Assembly conducted at such time during the Assembly and in such manner as the Chairman may determine.

## **BY-LAW XV: APPOINTMENT OF PASTORAL RELATIONS OFFICER**

1. Where the Assembly determines that a Pastoral Relations Officer should be appointed, the manner of such appointment, the term of office, termination, re-appointment and review will be consistent with those set out in By-law XIV in relation to the position of General Secretary.
2. Any Pastoral Relations Officer so appointed shall be an officer of the Fellowship and an ex-officio member of the Ministry Committee and the Home Mission and Evangelism Committee.

## **BY-LAW XVI: DISCIPLINE**

1. Where it appears to any member of the Executive Committee that doctrinal, moral and/or ethical standards may have been breached by affiliated churches, affiliated groups, recognised missionaries, accredited pastors, accredited ministers or other individuals appointed or elected to the Executive Committee, sub-committee or an office under the Constitution for these By-Laws, the matter is to be dealt with in accordance with Guidelines adopted by the Assembly from time to time.

2. If the Executive Committee forms that view, the following provisions of this By-Law shall apply until the matter has been determined by Assembly:

(i) The Executive Committee shall require a person who, in its view, has breached the standards –  
(a) not to represent himself or herself as being accredited or recognised by the Fellowship (if the person viewed as having breached standards is a pastor, minister or missionary); or  
(b) not to exercise any functions as an officer or an Executive Committee or sub-committee member and not to represent himself or herself as an officer or an Executive Committee or sub-committee member (if the person viewed as having breached standards is an officer or committee member).

(ii) Provided that if a person is convicted of sexual abuse of children or young people; the Executive Committee is authorised to act on behalf of the Assembly;

(iii) A person of whom such a requirement is made shall comply with the requirement.

(iv) During a period when a person elected or appointed to the Executive Committee, a sub-committee or an office under the Constitution or these By-Laws is bound by such a requirement, a casual vacancy is deemed to exist and may be filled, but only for the duration of that period, in accordance with By-Law V.

(v) The Executive Committee is to determine eligibility for any payment, allowance or support (other than a payment or allowance in respect of services or materials already rendered) extended by the Fellowship to the affiliated church, affiliated group, accredited minister, recognised missionary, officer or Executive Committee or sub-committee member. The determination remains in force until varied or revoked by the Committee or Assembly.

## **BY-LAW XVII: POSTAL BALLOT**

1. When a vacancy needs to be filled, otherwise than in accordance with By-Law III (10), V or XIV(8) and the Executive Committee determines that there is no reasonable opportunity to bring it to an Assembly or Special Assembly, it may instruct the Returning Officer to conduct a Postal Ballot.

2. Nominations for such vacancy may be made by each affiliated church and/or Executive Committee subject to By-Law III (8) (b).

3. The ballot shall be open for such time as determined by the Executive Committee but for not less than three weeks.

4. Each person eligible to vote at the preceding Assembly and who have not lost their eligibility, shall be entitled to vote in a Postal Ballot and the Returning Officer will ensure that ballot papers are distributed accordingly.

5. No person shall be declared elected unless they receive a majority of votes cast.

6. Counting of votes shall be scrutinised by the Executive Committee.

7. The President or Chairman of the Executive Committee is authorised to declare the result of the ballot.



## **BY-LAW XVIII: ALTERATIONS OF BY LAWS**

These By-Laws may from time to time be amended, altered, repealed or replaced by any Assembly by a two-thirds majority, provided that the same are not inconsistent with the Constitution of the Fellowship.