

Canadian Evangelical Christian Fellowship
Covenant and Organization

Amended
October 10th, 2009

Canadian Evangelical Christian Fellowship

Covenant and Organization

Amended October 10th, 2009

Covenant

Preamble and Name

The Canadian Evangelical Christian Fellowship (CECF) is a fellowship of evangelical, congregationally-governed churches shaped by its heritage in the Christian Church restoration movement. We seek to glorify God, making a unique contribution on the Canadian Church landscape through the witness of our unity in Christ in fellowship, encouragement and cooperative endeavours. By these means, we seek to celebrate the uniqueness of our Christian heritage, and commend the way of Christ to all people. (John 17:21-23; Matthew 28:18-20)

Let God be our witness as we share our covenant in this manner:

Covenant

We, in the presence of God, confess Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, dedicating ourselves to His service, and taking His Word as the rule of life.

We covenant to live our lives in such a manner as to bring glory to God, relying on the Holy Spirit to fulfill our promise.

We covenant to participate, as the Spirit leads, in the fellowship of the CECF, giving freely of our time, our talents and our treasure.

By this covenant, we acknowledge the need for the saving grace of God and the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church. We also acknowledge the need of believers for fellowship with one another. And, in the understanding that Jesus is the sole head of the Church universal, we accept the rights and responsibilities of His Body the Church as set forth in the Holy Scriptures.

We make this covenant with God, submitting to His authority and discipline.

We make this covenant with one another in the fellowship and unity of the Holy Spirit as brothers and sisters in Christ bearing witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Further, we covenant to uphold the Statement of Faith, The Statement of Polity and The Historic Principles of The Christian Church, as herein set forth:

Statement of Faith

1. We believe that the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments is the only divinely inspired and infallible revelation of God. It is our only guide and final authority in matters pertaining to faith and life.
2. We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. We believe in the deity of the lord Jesus Christ, His conception by the Holy Ghost, His birth of the Virgin Mary, His real but sinless humanity, His voluntary humiliation in life as a Man of Sorrows culminating in His substitutionary and atoning death as a sacrifice for sin, His bodily resurrection from the dead, His ascension into heaven as the only and eternal mediator between God and man and His coming again in power and glory.
4. We believe in the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit through whom man is born again to saving repentance and faith, and by whom the saints are sanctified and enabled to live a godly life.
5. We believe that the salvation of man is solely by grace through faith in Jesus Christ; that the saved partake of eternal life now and will share in that glorious resurrection which is to come.
6. We believe that man in consequence of the fall is utterly sinful and therefore lost, and the unsaved will be raised for final judgment.
7. We believe in the spiritual unity of all who truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, that is, the only holy universal Church, which is the body of Christ.

Statement of Polity

1. We believe that Jesus Christ is Head of His body, the Church universal, and of each local church.
2. We believe that each church is in itself a complete church and therefore autonomous and possesses, by the Holy Spirit, all the rights and responsibilities of the church as set forth in the Holy Scriptures.
3. We believe that Jesus Christ exercises His authority in each local church by the Holy Spirit and through the Holy Scriptures.
4. We believe that each local church is amenable only to Jesus Christ, and not to any association, conference, council, synod or any other ecclesiastical body.
5. We believe that it is proper and beneficial for each local church to seek fellowship and counsel of other local churches.

Historic Principles of the Christian Church

1. Jesus Christ the sole Head of the Church
2. Christian the only name.
3. The divinely inspired Scriptures, otherwise known as the Bible, the sole rule of faith and practice.
4. The privilege and duty of each member to interpret, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Bible for himself.
5. Christian character – that is the experience of the new birth in Christ expressing itself in daily living – the sole test of fellowship.
6. The unity of all believers our aim, as a witness to Christ's Atonement for sin and to the end that all may be saved by faith in Him.

Organization

Purpose

1. To seek the welfare and express the faith and the true unity of the whole Church of Jesus Christ.
2. To extend and enrich the fellowship of our churches and pastors.
3. To encourage a steadfast, Biblical witness by our churches.
4. To foster cooperation and counsel among our churches with regard to evangelism, spiritual life, Christian education, stewardship, missions, church extension, Christian action, men's and women's fellowships, youth activities, the pastoral ministry, and other related concerns.
5. To arrange, direct or transact such business as may be thought proper and necessary in connection with and for the interests and honour of the Canadian Evangelical Christian Fellowship.
6. To preserve and promote the Scriptural principles of the autonomy of the local church and freedom of the believer in Christ.

Membership

1. Membership in this Fellowship shall be attained by congregations that find themselves in full accord with the Covenant of the Fellowship as set forth above.
2. The following steps will be taken when a congregation desires to covenant with the CECF:
 - i) A prospective member congregation requests and receives information concerning the CECF.
 - ii) The prospective member congregation sends a letter to the Fellowship Council, stating that it is in full accord with the Covenant of the CECF.

CECF Covenant and Organization

- iii) The Fellowship Council notifies the prospective member congregation that they will receive a response concerning their membership within 60 days.
 - iv) At the same time, the Fellowship Council circulates the name and other information concerning the prospective member congregation among the current member congregations. Current member congregations are asked to state, within a minimum of 30 days, any reservations or objections concerning the prospective member congregation.
 - v) In the absence of any obstacles, the Fellowship Council informs the prospective member congregation that they will be received into Covenant membership at the next full meeting of the membership.
 - vi) At the next meeting of the membership of the CECF, representatives of all member congregations and the representatives of the prospective member congregation will affirm the CECF Covenant together.
3. In the event that a member church has departed from the standards of faith and practice set forth in our Covenant, other members of the Fellowship will pursue restoration, correction and discipline according to Matthew 18:15-17 and Galatians 6:1-10.
 4. Associate Membership may be granted to individuals under conditions to be determined.

Fellowship Council

As a Christian Fellowship formed by Covenant and mutual trust, we believe that administrative hierarchy should be limited, especially in areas in which it encroaches on the autonomy of local churches.

However, in order to accomplish the stated purpose of the Fellowship, the planning, execution and evaluation of Fellowship activities will be administered by a Fellowship Council consisting of a minimum of seven (7) and maximum of eleven (11) persons including a Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and members-at-large.

The term of office for each position should not exceed three (3) years, after which time the person shall be retired for one year before being eligible to hold office again.

All members of this Fellowship Council will perform their required duties and responsibilities on a "voluntary" basis.

The members of the Fellowship Council will serve in a leadership role in the following areas:

1. Planning and organizing the annual conference.
2. Planning and organizing an annual or semi-annual pastoral fellowship gathering.
3. Planning and development of outreach and youth support programs.
4. Other tasks as assigned by the general membership.

The Council is at liberty to call for voluntary assistance from individuals within the membership.

Nomination and Election

The founding Fellowship Council shall be nominated and elected by the representatives of member churches at a general meeting of the Fellowship called for this purpose. The founding Council shall have two members who will serve a one-year term, two members who will serve a two-year term, and three members who will serve a three-year term.

Subsequently, Council members shall be nominated and elected at the annual conference

Meeting, and will serve a three-year term.

Fellowship Council Members' Responsibilities and Duties

Chair

1. It shall be the duty of the Chair to preside during sittings of the annual conference and other meetings of the Fellowship.
2. The Chair shall be responsible to assure that a date is set for the annual meeting of conference, and to call any other special meetings of the Fellowship Council or the Fellowship as may be required from time to time.
3. The Chair may be elected for a three-year term after which time he shall be retired for one year before being eligible to hold office again.
4. At the termination of his term of office the Chair shall serve the Fellowship Council in an advisory capacity.

Vice-Chair

1. The Vice-Chair shall assist the Chair in his duties, and preside at meetings at which the Chair is unable to attend.

Secretary

1. The Secretary shall faithfully note and record all the minutes of meetings of the Fellowship.
2. The Secretary shall conduct all correspondence for the Fellowship in and between sessions.
3. The Secretary shall publish the time and place for holding the Annual Meeting of the Fellowship two months before such time arrives, and give due notice of all meetings of the body and of the Fellowship Council.

Treasurer

1. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to keep and invest funds belonging to the Fellowship.

Meetings

1. This Fellowship shall hold one session annually, and special sessions from time to time as the interests of the cause may demand.

CECF Covenant and Organization

2. The place and time of the annual conference shall be decided by the representatives of member churches with direction from the Fellowship Council.
3. Each church belonging to this Fellowship shall be entitled to four voting delegates per first one hundred members or fraction thereof, and thereafter one delegate for each five hundred members or fraction thereof. If a minister is one of these, he/she may vote at the annual meeting; otherwise he/she may speak from the floor but not vote.
4. The Order of business for the Annual Meeting shall be as follows:
 - 1) Calling the Roll
 - 2) Affirming the Covenant
 - 3) Reading Minutes of previous meeting
 - 4) Unfinished Business
 - 5) Slated Business
 - 6) New Business
 - 7) Programme
5. In order to transact business, two-thirds of voting members present shall constitute a quorum.

Pastoral Credentials

The granting of credentials will be the prerogative and responsibility of each local congregation.

Finances

As the Fellowship incurs expenses and needs arise, and after approval by the Fellowship Council to accept such expenses, member churches will share the cost. The Treasurer and the Chair and/or Vice-Chair and/or Secretary shall be signing authorities on behalf of the Fellowship (a minimum of two signatures required on any instrument).

Church Name

Signatory

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Over . . .

CECF Covenant and Organization

Church Name	Signatory

Appendix A

Amendment to the founding *Covenant and Organization - Draft 3* as passed at the 1st Annual Conference of the CECF in Brantford, November 3rd, 2007.

Amendments

This Covenant and these Organizational tenets may be amended at any annual CECF Conference by a vote of two-thirds of all voting delegates present, provided such amendments have been proposed at the previous annual meeting.