

Approved Document

Constitution and Bylaws
Sovereign Grace Baptist Fellowship

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ARTICLE I - NAME

The name shall be "Sovereign Grace Baptist Fellowship."

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

To establish and maintain a Fellowship of Baptist pastors and churches which believe that salvation rests ultimately in the sovereign grace of God; to provide a medium for fellowship and mutual encouragement so that such pastors and churches may be edified in love and grace; to cooperate together in the carrying out of the Great Commission in those areas that cannot well be accomplished alone, namely world missions, church planting, and the education of aspiring, God-called ministers; and to assist one another in the maintenance and promotion of sound biblical doctrine and practice in ways deemed necessary and right in the honest light of Holy Scripture.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

(amended by the SGBF General Assembly, September 13, 2005)

Section 1: A Statement Concerning the Autonomy of the Local Church

- 1) The Fellowship may not interfere in any manner with the affairs of its member churches.
- 2) All cooperation in the Sovereign Grace Baptist Fellowship is strictly voluntary and the Fellowship can make no demands of its member churches beyond its purpose of association.
- 3) The only authority the Fellowship has over a church is: 1) whether or not the church is admitted into the Fellowship as a member church; and 2) whether or not the membership of a church in the Fellowship is terminated by the Fellowship. Both of these are determined by majority votes of the Fellowship.

- 4) The Fellowship may offer advice to a member church if it is requested to do so by:
 - 1) a majority of the duly elected of the officers of that church; or
 - 2) a congregational request made in accordance with the church's own constitution or by-laws.

- 5) The Fellowship will not respond to requests of individuals or groups within its member churches.

Section 2: Admission To The Fellowship.

- 1) Churches who desire membership in the SGBF must:
 - A. Be in general agreement with both the Articles of Faith of the Fellowship and the Constitution and By-Laws of the Fellowship.

 - B. Send a letter to the Secretary of their desire to be a member of the SGBF.

- 2) Churches that meet all the qualifications of membership can be approved by a three-fourths vote of the member churches. This vote will occur at the Annual Fellowship Meeting or during the year by a vote using mail, fax, or email.

Section 3: Voting Procedures.

- 1) Each church shall be entitled to send one voting messenger to the annual meeting.

- 2) Each voting messenger of a member church must register before being seated in the annual meeting. Only the voting messenger of the member church is allowed to vote on any issue that comes up before the Fellowship.

- 3) Only the voting messengers shall be allowed to speak and vote on an issue before the Fellowship. Exceptions to this can only be made by the Chairman of the Fellowship or the Vice-Chairman in the Chairman's absence.

- 4) No decision of the Fellowship shall be binding on any of the churches except by their consent.

Section 4: Withdrawal from the Fellowship

- 1) A church may withdraw from the membership in the Fellowship at any time and for any reason sufficient to themselves.
- 2) The only request that the Fellowship makes to the church is that it lets the Fellowship know in writing that it has withdrawn its membership. This letter should be sent to the Secretary of the Fellowship.

ARTICLE IV - OFFICERS

Section 1. Executive Committee

The officers of the Fellowship shall consist of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer. These shall compose the Executive Committee and shall have the general supervision of all Fellowship work and projects.

Section 2. Chairman and Vice-Chairman

- A. The church representatives of the Fellowship may nominate each year two men for each office. These shall be submitted to the Secretary before the annual meeting and he shall count the nominations and the two highest nominees shall be presented to the Fellowship to be voted upon. These two officers shall be eligible for re-nomination to the Executive Committee, but shall not serve more than two consecutive terms.
- B. The Chairman shall preside at all business meetings of the Fellowship and the Executive Committee.
- C. The Vice-Chairman shall be active in the leadership of the Fellowship and Executive Committee, moderating meetings when the Chairman is absent.

Section 3. Secretary

The Secretary shall be elected annually and shall keep accurate records of all meetings of the Fellowship and Executive Committee. He shall be curator of the official correspondence of the Fellowship. All records and minutes of the meetings shall be considered the property of the Fellowship.

Section 4. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be elected annually and shall dispense all funds as directed by the Fellowship and shall keep proper and accurate records of all said financial transactions. He shall provide necessary information and assistance to the Executive Committee in monetary procedures, and shall make an annual financial report to the Fellowship. At all times his records shall be considered the property of the Fellowship and shall be subject to reasonable right of examination by other Fellowship officers or pastors. His records shall be audited by a certified public accountant in accordance with the direction of the Executive Committee.

Section 5. Committees

As the need arises, the Executive Committee may recommend and the Fellowship can establish the necessary committees to head up the various activities of the Fellowship in the area of missions, church planting, education, publications, or other mutual endeavors. These committees shall be nominated by the Executive Committee and voted upon by the Fellowship. They shall report to the Executive Committee and to the Fellowship annually.

Section 6. General Procedures for Officers

All new officers shall assume their duties at the closing session of the Annual Meeting. All officers and members of committees shall be participating pastors or members of Fellowship churches. They shall at all times consider themselves servants of Christ and of the churches.

ARTICLE V - MEETINGS

Section 1. Annual Meeting

A meeting of the Fellowship shall be held annually, in conjunction with a Bible or Missionary Conference, at the invitation of a member church through its pastor. The date and place of the annual meeting shall be finally determined by the Executive Committee. Other meetings could also be held according to need and desire of the pastors and churches.

Section 2. Business Meeting

A business session shall be held at the annual meeting for the election of officers, committees, and for the transaction of other necessary Fellowship business.

Section 3. Quorum

All business shall be decided by a majority vote of the assembled church representatives in a duly-called business meeting, unless otherwise specified. Those members present at any properly called meeting shall be considered a quorum.

Section 4. Parliamentary Order

According to the Scriptures (Philippians 2:3-4), all things should be done decently and in order. Any disputed procedure will be determined by the will of the Fellowship.

ARTICLE VI - FISCAL POLICY

Section 1. Budget

The Fellowship shall approve at its annual meetings the raising and dispensing of all funds for the various common efforts that shall be endeavored. Accordingly the Treasurer, upon recommendation of the Executive Committee, shall disburse all such funds in accordance with the allocations approved by the Fellowship.

Section 2. General Fund

The Treasurer shall maintain a General Fund, and as many other funds as necessary, to handle contributions for various Fellowship causes. The Executive Committee shall, after proper consideration, authorize the Treasurer to pay all regular and ordinary expenses incurred by the Fellowship and its officers out of the General Fund.

Section 3. Designated Funds

The Treasurer shall maintain records of any designated funds and these shall be disbursed in accordance with the indicated designation. Such designations might include individual missionaries and projects, ministerial training, beneficence, the General Fund, and such like. The Fellowship retains the right to refuse any designation not in accord with our stated purposes and contrary to the spirit of our Articles of Faith. Such contributions will be returned to the donors.

Section 4. Projects and Agencies

All projects and agencies must be approved by the Fellowship, and shall submit an accounting of its activities and expenses through its committees to the Executive Committee and the Fellowship.

ARTICLE VII - DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

The Word of God is our only infallible and final guide for our faith and practice and it alone can assert itself over our consciences. It remains supremely authoritative for us over any Confession of Faith adopted by the Fellowship.

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Fellowship Confession of Faith (a revision of the New Hampshire Confession of Faith) shall be considered a general expression of our doctrinal belief and is not intended to limit or bind the faith of any participating pastor or church. Neither shall any matter not covered in these Articles of Faith necessarily be considered a test of fellowship among us.

AMENDMENTS

Amendment One - Amending the Constitution

(adopted September 13, 2005)

This Constitution of the Sovereign Grace Baptist Fellowship may be amended in one of two ways: (1) Ordinary Amendment, or (2) Emergency Amendment.

Ordinary Amendment.

The Constitution may be ordinarily amended as follows:

- A. By recommendation of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee may, by a 75 per cent vote of the committee, present an amendment for consideration to the General Assembly at the annual meeting. The amendment shall be taken under consideration after having been presented at the annual meeting with the vote taken to approve it at the next annual meeting. A 75 per cent vote of the attending and voting representatives of the churches will be required to approve such an amendment.
- A. By motion and second from the floor. A proposed amendment may be offered by any representative of the churches of the fellowship. A majority vote of the attending representatives shall place the amendment before the General Assembly at the next annual meeting. A 75 per cent vote of the attending and voting representatives shall be required to approve the amendment.

Emergency Amendment.

Recognizing that certain situations may require an emergency amendment, the constitution may be amended as follows. Any attending representative may move to amend the constitution at at the current meeting of the General Assembly, with a second to the motion required. Such an amendment shall be taken immediately under the advisement of the Executive Committee which may forward it to the floor with a 75 per cent vote of the Committee. A short recess of the meeting of the General Assembly may be called in order for the Executive Committee to consider the amendment. A 90 per cent vote of the attending and voting representatives shall be required to approve the emergency amendment. It will take effect as determined by the General Assembly. The date of effectiveness shall be included in the final presentation to the General Assembly.