

Proposals from the Fellowship Council

Revised: July 8, 2008

Background: The board of directors of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches (FGBC) is called the “Fellowship Council.” It is made up of 12 people, four from each region of the country (East, West, and Central) who serve for four years. Members cannot serve sequential terms. The Moderator of the FGBC chairs this board. The Moderator is elected as a Second Moderator-elect and serves on the Fellowship Council for four years. He serves as Moderator for one year. Fellowship Council members and Moderators are elected by delegates at the annual business meeting of the Fellowship.

Summary:

- 1) Increase the size of the Fellowship Council from 12 to 15, from four to five from each region.
- 2) Increase the term of Fellowship Council member from four years to five years.
- 3) Decrease the time a Fellowship Council member is ineligible for re-election from four years to two years
- 4) Change the term of the Moderator (serving as Moderator) from one year to a one-, two-, or three- year term. At the time of the election, the nomination will include a specified term for approval by the delegates.
- 5) Elect the Vice Moderator and the Moderator on the same ballot in a single question for the same term.

Purpose: The Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches has been blessed by God. We have a rich heritage and strong commitment to biblical truth, relationships and mission. Our average church size is much higher than the national averages. In Ohio, our average church size is 300!

The next decade holds great promise for our family of churches. Can we see 300 new churches by 2020? Can we deploy 200 new missionaries? Can we equip 400 new pastors? Can we have a deep impact in regions of the world that face incredible social, economic, and spiritual challenges? Can we see someday start one new church a day? Can we be transformational forces in each of the 250 towns and cities in which we are located? Can we be a fresh voice for biblical truth in a relativistic world?

The FGBC has never relied on structure. We have a basic organization that seeks to recognize those who faithfully walk with God and allow them to influence. These changes are designed to help those who we elect to serve us better. It will increase the representation and term of members on the Fellowship Council. It will allow for a Moderator and a Vice Moderator to serve as a team and for vision to be communicated over a longer period of time.

Questions and Answers:

Q: How will changes to the Fellowship Council help realize our vision and core values?

A: The Fellowship Council is a highly representative group of leaders. The council has an entirely new membership every four years. More than 50 people have had the opportunity to serve on the council over the past 10 years. This has been a wonderful blessing but it also limits the council’s ability to process initiatives. These recommendations are designed to increase the highly participatory nature of the Fellowship Council and to increase the council’s ability to sustain focus and provide consistent leadership.

Q: How will changes to the office of Moderator help realize our vision and core values?

A: Currently, moderators have only one year to communicate and advance a vision for the FGBC. The change to a longer term will increase the opportunity for effective communication and team- building. Themes for conference and focus

retreats will become more consistent. Coordination with our National and Cooperating Ministries will be more meaningful.

Q: Will this require too much of a local pastor?

A: The total commitment would remain a maximum of four years. Moderators would be elected one year prior to the beginning of their term so they can be trained by the previous Moderator.

Q: Why do we need a Vice Moderator elected on a single ticket with the Moderator?

A: The Moderator-nominee would be able to select his Vice Moderator based on his giftedness and the needs of the FGBC. This would make a more effective leadership team.

Q: Will this create an unwanted power-block in the FGBC?

A: Member churches of the FGBC will remain autonomous. National and Cooperating Ministries will remain autonomous. The Fellowship Council will be more representative. Delegates from member churches will still elect Fellowship Council members and Moderators and approve new churches. The only change will be our ability to sustain and build a Fellowship-wide focus on ministry.

Q: How will these proposals be processed?

A: A first reading of proposed changes was presented at the 2007 conference business meeting. Fellowship Council members were available for feedback between the 2007 and 2008 conferences. A final recommendation at the 2008 conference required approval by the delegates. Based on feedback, the Fellowship Council recommends one amendment to the reading that would create the variable year term.

Q: How will these changes be implemented if approved?

A: John McIntosh has already been elected to serve as moderator in 2009. During National Conference in 2007 the Fellowship Council recommended that Tom Julien be elected to serve as moderator in 2010. However it was necessary for Tom to withdraw from consideration because of health concerns. Delegates agreed not to elect a Second Moderator-Elect in 2007 to allow the Fellowship Council and Nominating Committee time to prayerfully consider nominees for this important position. The Fellowship Council and Nominating Committee recommend Tom Hocking to serve as moderator in 2010. If the recommended changes to the Constitution and Manual of Procedure are approved in 2008, the first Moderator/Vice Moderator team will be elected in 2009 for a one-, two-, or three- year term beginning at the close of annual conference in 2010. Tom will serve as vice moderator in 2009 and John will serve as vice moderator under Tom in 2010. If those changes are not approved, a new plan will be presented to transition back to the current procedure for electing Second Moderator-elects.

Q: The first reading of proposed changes was for a fixed three-year term for moderator. What happened?

A: After the first reading, the Fellowship Council sponsored a number of open forum opportunities for feedback. Based on this feedback the Council recommends the variable term. The nominees and term would be approved by delegates at conference. This additional change will need to be presented as an amendment to the proposed changes.

Q: How will we phase in to the new Fellowship Council term?

A: Three names from each region will be nominated for Fellowship Council. If the proposed changes are approved, the Fellowship Council will recommend that the person with the most votes in each region be elected to a five-year term and the person with the next highest number of votes be elected to a four-year term.