

Fellowship of Mere Christianity Constitution

NAME

The name of the organization will be the *Fellowship of Mere Christianity*.

Article 1 - Mission Statement

Our Mission

In submission to Philippians 2:1-4 (“*let each esteem others better than himself*”), our objective is to foster identity, fellowship, resources, and accountability to churches, ministries, and individuals committed to catholicity within the bounds of orthodox Christianity and to extend Christ’s Kingdom in history.

Article 2 - Policy Statement

Foundational to the Fellowship of Mere Christianity is the understanding that each of us as individual parts of the body of Christ need to be integrally connected to the other parts of the body if we are to be all that we can be in Christ. We are called to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. That call is to the whole body of Christ regardless of sex, race, or social standing – all are one in Christ Jesus. The members of the Fellowship of Mere Christianity choose to live in the tension of the whole word of God: embracing all who adhere to the essentials of the faith and submitting ourselves to one another in love that Christ alone may be exalted in our culture.

Article 3 - Membership

Membership will be open to two classes — (1) churches and (2) individuals — who affirm the doctrinal basis and successfully complete the membership process.

A. Membership Criteria

1. Affirmation of The Apostles' and Nicene Creeds
2. Affirmation of the five solas:
 - a. sola scriptura: Bible is our final objective authority
 - b. solus christus: Christ is our only Savior and Lord
 - c. sola fide: faith is our only instrument of justification
 - d. sola gratia: salvation by grace (not human merit)
 - e. sola dei gloria: all and only for God's glory
3. Moral and ethical subscription to organization's values.

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B. Membership Process

1. Those who wish to join FMC must fill out a brief application form and be sponsored by an existing member. May join by vote of simple majority.
2. All applications for membership must be sponsored by a member church.
3. Any application for membership or any membership inquiry received by FMC from churches or individuals ("applicant") not sponsored by a member church will be referred by the moderator to a member church ("prospective sponsor"). The prospective sponsor will 1) become acquainted with the applicant, 2) determine if sponsorship is appropriate, and 3) if so, act as the applicant's sponsor.
4. Applications for membership must be received no later than thirty days prior to the FMC annual meeting.
5. Business sessions of the annual meeting are reserved for members. Applicants for membership may attend and participate in the general sessions of the annual meeting (teaching sessions and/or presentation of papers by members, discussion, and worship).
6. During the business sessions of the annual meeting, members will vote on the reception of applicants into provisional membership. Provisional members may participate in all activities of FMC but only full members may vote on issues put before the fellowship.
7. During the business sessions of the annual meeting, members will vote on the reception of provisional members into full membership. Provisional members qualify for full membership at the annual meeting following their acceptance into provisional membership.
8. The terms of expulsion are these: Beliefs inconsistent with the Apostles or Nicene Creed or any of the 5 solas.

C. Expulsion/Exclusion

1. Higher standard for excluding churches than individuals. Supermajority (75%) for expelling churches, simple majority for expelling individuals. Expulsion: happens when the church/person breaks with FMC criteria for membership. Who can initiate this expulsion? There must be at least three different churches to appeal to the FMC moderators.
2. Relationships exist with member churches or individuals - as they are listed on the membership roll. We don't deal with individuals who are members of member churches. If a church has a rogue elder, the entire church may be removed (never just the single elder).

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3. Members must be available to help mediate (count the cost of membership).
4. Membership is perpetual unless member resigns.
5. Easy to leave. A church may leave at any time. (self removal)
6. Be available to vote on issues that come to the "virtual floor" of the group (a VERY active discussion list). We meet all year (via the web) for business. We meet as a group once each year to review our work, elect moderators, receive teaching, worship together... Establish minimum time frames for structural changes, membership removals, all others are immediate.

D. Classes of Membership

The FMC may not exercise denominational or judicial authority over any of its members. Its authority rests entirely in reciprocal trust and confidence. There are 2 classes of membership.

1. **Churches** – It is to be understood that the FMC is principally a fellowship of churches and is the primary unit of membership. Whatever happens with the voting across membership classes, the churches should always have the heaviest influence on issues. Churches voting twice that of individuals. Each church will get two votes.
2. **Individuals** - Individuals should be allowed to become members if they are not already affiliated with a member congregation and are in good church standing. Individual members need to be sponsored by a member church.

Article 4 - Offices

A. Moderators

1. There will be 3 offices of moderator of equal authority: Outgoing Moderator, Moderator and Moderator Pro Tem.
2. Graduate through the ranks. Outgoing Moderator is on his last term... Moderator and Moderator Pro Tem will graduate upward to the Outgoing Moderator (each one serves 1 year as the particular office... total of 3 year term, 1 year in each position - this is a rotation).
3. Selection: Nominations from the virtual floor (or literal floor if none come in during the year). Moderators are elected simple majority vote.
4. All moderators must be members from separate congregations.
5. A moderator can be removed from any position. If removed for cause, 60 day time frame to replace, virtual floor.

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B. Outgoing Moderator's Tasks

1. Maintain continuity.

C. Moderator's Tasks

1. Lead the organization with continuous input of members (think "minority whip").
2. Moderate the virtual floor (online).
3. Represent the organization to other Christian ministries.
4. Help assign teams for mediation.
5. Work to plan annual meeting.
6. All powers not explicitly delegated to the moderators are reserved to the local congregations, organizations and individuals.
7. Manage literature, etc.
8. Facilitate interaction between members.

D. Moderator Pro Tem's Tasks

1. Assist the Moderator.
2. Learn the ropes.

Article 5 - Meetings

- A. Planned and presided over by moderators in conjunction with other members.
- B. A blend of business, teaching, worship and fellowship.

Article 6 - Voting

In order for a vote on any topic to be binding at least 60% of all members must cast votes.

Article 7 - Credentials and Ordination

- A. We don't ordain anybody, ordination papers can be "held" by local congregations.
- B. We will provide help reviewing leadership candidates and recommendations.