

# AFFIRMATION OF FAITH REPORT

From Fellowship National Council

## Affirmation of Faith Update

The Fellowship's National Council is pleased to inform our member churches that a draft of the Fellowship National Affirmation of Faith is complete.

On April 4, 2024, the Fellowship's Affirmation of Faith Team completed the draft (rev. 3) and presented it to National Council on May 14, 2024 for their review. Their revisions, along with the modifications from Regional leaders highlighted at a June 2024 meeting, will be reviewed at the AoF Team's next meeting in August 2024.

The AoF draft will be translated into French and will be sent to all our member churches in early September 2024 or sooner.

A significant task has been accomplished in the preparation of our draft Affirmation of Faith. Join me in thanking the Lord for the care and diligence our AoF Team has taken in this historic and weighty endeavour on behalf of all of us.

The AoF Team's work took place between February 2023 and April 2024. The Team began by forming a sub-committee to create an AoF Survey which was launched during the month of April 2023. Almost 500 individuals completed the survey and analysis was completed and distributed to AoF Team members by June 2023. At an AoF Team meeting in Toronto (August 2023) the AoF Team divided into sub-committees:

- **Sub-committee #1 (chaired by S. Jones)** were tasked to write the Articles of the draft AoF.
- **Sub-committee #2 (chaired by D. Blair)** were tasked to provide Scripture support for each Article.

Sub-committees #1 and #2 convened in multiple virtual meetings between September 2023 and February 2024 to complete their assigned tasks. Only six Fellowship churches chose to submit suggestions to modify our current Affirmation of Faith by the deadline of February 28, 2024. These suggestions were prayerfully considered by the AoF Team in their next two gatherings.

The entire AoF Team met March 4-5, 2024 and April 4, 2024 to vet the work of both sub-committees and finalize a Revision 2 and later a Revision 3. Many modifications were made between revisions.

### AoF Team Members

Doug Blair (Chair)  
Paul Carter  
Alex Hogendoorn  
Barry Howson  
Gabriel Lauter  
John Mahaffey  
Jenn Martin  
Jonathan McLeod  
Krista Penner  
Barton Priebe  
Tom Smith  
Jon Stairs  
François Turcotte  
R.J. Umandap

### Ex Officio:

Steve Jones  
Rob Cole

# Affirmation of Faith Vetting Process Begins

In the Fall of 2024, we will begin our vetting process as a family of churches. Our three-year journey has been designed for transparency and freedom for member churches and constituency members to share their concerns and suggestions for our future statement of beliefs. We encourage you to read the [AoF Process Document](#) for further details on our process journey.

We will begin to prayerfully examine, appraise, and carefully check the work of our Fellowship AoF Team starting in September, as follows:

## September 2024

- Each member church of the Fellowship will be emailed a copy of the draft Fellowship National Affirmation of Faith (AoF).
- Two virtual (Zoom) town halls will be held:  
Doug Blair (AoF Team Chair) and Steve Jones (National President) will host two virtual gatherings with other AoF Team members:
  - September 19, 2024 (1:00-3:00pm EST): Vetting articles on the Bible, Trinity, Father, Son, Holy Spirit, Satan, and Humanity
  - September 26, 2024 (1:00-3:00pm EST): Vetting articles on Salvation, Future Things, Local Church, Ordinances, Lord's Day, Religious Liberty, and Church and State.

## September to October 15, 2024

- Attached to the draft AoF will be a brief "Church Board AoF Survey" to be completed by each church leadership board (one per church) and submitted to the AoF Team by October 15, 2024. The survey information will be collated, analyzed, and shared at FNC 2024, and later used for further modification of future draft(s) of our Fellowship National Affirmation of Faith.

## November 12, 2024

- A meeting will convene at FNC 2024 on Tuesday (November 12) from 1:30-5:00pm (EST) with opportunity for discussion by delegates in attendance in Niagara Falls, ON.
- A report will be presented sharing the suggestions, encouragements, and concerns made by church leaders (via the Church Board survey) and by the Fellowship constituency via the two virtual town hall meetings in September.
- An extended opportunity for FNC delegates to discuss the 14 draft articles will occur with suggestions and concerns noted. No formal motions will take place in this meeting: it is not a business meeting, but a gathering to examine and appraise the draft articles. Suggestions and concerns will be captured and reported to the AoF Team as they convene post-FNC to continue the vetting process.



# The Vetting Process Post-FNC 2024

## November 14, 2024

- Fellowship National Council gathers to debrief and discuss what they heard from church boards (September-October survey), virtual town hall meetings (September), and FNC delegates (November 12).

## November 2024 - January 2025

- Possible further virtual opportunities to hear from the Fellowship constituency may be offered if deemed needed.

## February 10-12, 2025

- The AoF Team gather to prepare a final draft of the Fellowship National Affirmation of Faith, considering all suggested revisions and additions. The AoF Team will present the final draft to the Fellowship National Council for their review and approval.

## February 2025

- Fellowship National Council will approve the motion(s) associated with the final draft of the Affirmation of Faith and send the final draft AoF and motion(s) to all member Fellowship churches.

## March-November 2025

- Member churches will enter into a time of prayer.

## November 3-5, 2025

- Member churches will vote on the final draft of the Fellowship National Affirmation of Faith at FNC 2025 at the Delta Airport Hotel and Conference Centre in Toronto, ON.

## Affirmation of Faith “Sneak Peek”

Our President, Steven Jones, recently completed his Spring 2024 cross-country tour, attending each of the five Fellowship Regional conferences. He heard a lot of curiosity concerning the work of the AoF Team. He was unable to share anything other than the plan to send the draft AoF to our member churches in early September and discuss it two months later at FNC 2024 in Niagara Falls, ON (November 11-13, 2024).

However, here is a “sneak peek” of some of the things to expect:

- There are 14 articles in the draft Affirmation of Faith.
- Several things missing from the original AoF have been included like the humanity of Christ, the universal church, the Kingdom of God, the person of God the Father, and the Trinity.
- Greater clarity has been provided concerning the order of the ordinances, the transmission of Scripture, the three persons of the Godhead, work of the Holy Spirit, offices of the local church, the Lord’s Day, and the Church’s relationship to the State.
- Scripture support has been added to each article.
- And lastly, there was an intentional effort to write all 14 articles in a well-paced, carefully punctuated, and pleasant style.



# The Fellowship's Affirmation of Faith Q&A

Our AoF Team is currently preparing a discipleship tool to accompany our revised Fellowship National Affirmation of Faith.

At an in-person AoF Team meeting in Toronto on March 4-5, 2024, the team formed a sub-committee to prepare a first draft of the *AoF Q&A Tool*. Sub Committee #3 is chaired by Pastor Jon Stairs.

At the AoF Team gathering in August 2024, the draft will be refined and improved and further revisions will continue to be made throughout late 2024 into 2025. The AoF Team hopes to present this discipleship resource tool, which will closely

accompany the revised Fellowship National Affirmation of Faith, to the delegates at FNC 2025 in Toronto.

The primary motivation behind an accompanying resource tool is to be able to use our new AoF as a way to disciple, teach, and train our people in doctrine, faith, and conduct. The AoF Q&A will clarify complex terms like “propitiation”, illumine doctrinal concepts, explain baptistic distinctives, and underscore important areas of faith and conduct.

Imagine our future Affirmation of Faith becoming a means by which we disciple our people.

## Affirmation of Faith *(reprinted from Thrive, Spring/Summer 2024)*

by Doug Blair

We have likely all heard a few sermons on the importance of having a good foundation for our lives. Every one of them probably urged building on the foundation which God has offered to us in Christ. In our Affirmation of Faith, our forefathers have laid out our understanding of the foundational truths that serve two purposes: firstly, they unite us as a movement in the things that we believe, enabling us to work closely together. Secondly, they separate us from those of different persuasions.

Much has changed in the realm of theology since our beginning as a Fellowship. Questions have arisen that were unthought of in 1953. Language has changed. The issues we face have changed. However, the Word of God has not changed. In light of these realities, our Fellowship has embarked upon a journey to refresh and somewhat expand our Affirmation of Faith.

A team of faithful and theologically strong men and women from across our country has been assembled to lead us in this important exercise. As chair of the committee, it has been my privilege to experience the unity of spirit and the strong commitment to Scripture of all on the team.

Our mandate is to refresh our Affirmation of Faith while remaining faithful to our document's original intent. There has been a sense that a few additions need to be crafted to address current issues.

What “additions” and “refreshing” are we talking about? Our team is currently working through that exact question. We have polled our Fellowship family and listened to many thoughts. The team met face-to-face in late August 2023, in March 2024, and by Zoom many times in between. We will report to our churches and invite comment. We're working to share as widely as possible to garner the broadest possible response and understanding before our 2024 Fellowship National Conference (FNC) this November. We plan to send a draft of the revised Affirmation of Faith to our churches in late summer, with discussion to follow at FNC 2024. It is our hope to have a final document ready to present at FNC 2025.

Our prayer is that our strong foundation may be made even stronger in this time of ministry opportunity.

— *Doug Blair serves in interim pastoral work and is Chair of the Fellowship National Council and Chair of the Fellowship Affirmation of Faith Team.*