



Fellowship Prairies

Encounter God, Equip God's People, Engage God's World

Fellowship Prairies Inc

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Members of Fellowship Prairies Inc,

I write to you on behalf of the Leadership Board with respect to the motions that were distributed last week by some churches.

I would like to first confirm that, though these issues have been part of mediation/arbitration, we were not consulted or made aware of these motions by the churches involved, in advance of their distribution.

Moreover, the board does not support either motion, for different reasons which I will explain below, dealing with them in the order they were received.

1. The motion for Clarifying Pastoral Roles

The Fellowship Prairies Leadership Board has affirmed the Position Statement on the Gender Issue in Pastoral Leadership in Fellowship Churches as voted on at the National Convention, November 4, 1997. As such, Fellowship Prairies policy currently holds the complementarian position.

However, as independent churches, the FPLB recognizes that each member church has the ability to apply this according to their own convictions while still subject to the interpretation and accountability of the Leadership Board and the Membership. In this, while we value clarity and staying true to God's Word, we also recognize that at some points in fellowship together we need grace for each other - to allow each member church to apply the biblical model in different ways according to their principles.

The FPLB reaffirms the region's complementarian position, but feels this motion is too strong and the implications too severe to allow for grace and autonomy within the bounds of our Statement of Faith.

2. The motion for Third Party Investigation

The board disagrees with the premise of this motion in its entirety and its detail.

As directed unanimously by the membership at Equip 2024, the FPLB has been actively seeking to finish the Dispute Resolution process defined clearly in our bylaws. However, a vote to affirm this motion would:



- i. Violate the bylaws, particularly Section 9, dispute resolution.
- ii. Effectively release these churches from the Dispute Resolution process and any accountability for their actions.
- iii. Contradict and undermine the voted motion of Equip 2024 to send all parties to mediation and if necessary binding arbitration as defined in the bylaws.
- iv. Release the parties from the clear bylaw requirement for confidentiality in the Dispute Resolution process, and effectively force the membership to become the judge of each dispute to the further detriment of unity in this body.
- v. Endorse and enable the divisive behavior exhibited by the movers of this motion.

For these same reasons, though not limited to them, it is the FPLB's position that the actions of the leadership of Park City Gospel Church and Fairview Baptist Church are sinfully divisive. The board also feels their actions clearly demonstrate their ongoing refusal to submit to the Membership, Bylaws, and Leadership of Fellowship Prairies, violating the terms of membership.

In short, the FPLB considers that Park City Gospel Church and Fairview Baptist Church are NOT in good standing with our organization. These disputes have once again been brought to the membership and therefore we urge the Membership to take action on this matter. Further, the board feels that apart from the clear action of the membership, this issue will only continue to distract from the Kingdom work Fellowship Prairies exists to do. The board feels that this would be wrong and neglectful to continue.

We know this is strong language and ask that you seek to discern the right path as you come to Equip 2025. These are not statements that we make lightly or without careful consideration and conviction. The Membership created the bylaws and voted for this board to serve and lead you in Fellowship Prairies matters. This is our recommendation to you. Please consider reviewing our bylaws in preparation for this meeting. Also please pray for God to be honored in this process. We humbly ask for your guidance and decision in this matter.

Ben Smith
Chair, Fellowship Prairies Leadership Board

