



better together



Our Co-operative Fellowship

“We are a co-operative Fellowship and our relationships are marked by mutual trust, value, and respect for one another. We are church leaders who work interdependently, as one team.”

REV. DR. DAVID R. WELLS | General Superintendent , The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada

“A river without banks is a large puddle.” DON SHULA | NFL coaching legend

Healthy banks permit a river to flow; they give direction to the river and lead it to larger bodies of water.

Affiliation.
Self-governance.
Co-operative Fellowship.
Three overarching principles of the PAOC.

forceful life-giving river

The General Superintendent of the PAOC describes the governance of the Fellowship as a **forceful, life-giving river running between two banks**. This is a powerful image. Riverbanks have been identified as vitally important and valuable, providing great significance to the rivers and communities they support. The principles of self-governance and affiliation are represented by the riverbanks in this picture of governance for the PAOC. These two riverbanks support the co-operative Fellowship that is enjoyed by the participating churches affiliated with the PAOC.

As a co-operative Fellowship of 1,200+ churches in Canada, our sustaining relationship is vital. We need the strength of other disciple-making communities standing around us, helping us maintain **healthy, functioning churches**. We operate at our best in relationship with other local, district, national and international leaders doing ministry alongside us. We accomplish **greater**

things for God's kingdom when we are connected as a Fellowship, guided by a shared mission.

To be co-operative demands mutual trust, value, respect, as well as high levels of communication, participation and input.

To accomplish greater things across our nation and in our own provinces, cities and towns, local churches practice generosity to our co-labourers. Through our **expression of being a co-operative Fellowship**, we tithe (10%) to the Fellowship through our respective districts, and in turn practice a shared responsibility of tithing to the international office. These funds help support approximately 70% of the Fellowship Services budget and 30% of the Mission Canada budget. Mission Global, while an effective global expression of our cooperative Fellowship, receives its support separately through engaged congregations and donors.

WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER...

- We demonstrate our desire to work together from the outset by affiliating.
- We participate together as a relationally-based mission family, investing in the shared vision and mission of the Fellowship.
- We financially support the Fellowship's district and International Office's ministries and services through a Fellowship tithe (10%) of our local church's contributions.
- We actively engage and support the national and international mission of the PAOC as an expression of the local church's ministry.

Rivers are important to people. In Scripture we see that they are also important to God. Rivers are always moving. Powerful waters provide refreshment and rest for people, as well as nourishment for the ecosystem around them. We can never underestimate the important role of a church in a local community and the incredible impact it can have.

The Local Church

While we are diverse as local churches in our expression as self-governing assemblies, it is amazing when we realize that we are all steadfast in our collective effort to **make disciples . . . everywhere.**



There is incredible power in shared vision.

The local church is like a refreshing, forceful, life-giving river.

diversity unitycommunity

A Anyone living near one of Canada's great rivers knows that the river's flow often changes throughout the year, running high during rainy seasons and low during dry summer months. There are similar seasons in the life of a local church but across Canada this truth remains: PAOC churches are places where God's people, empowered by and dependent on the Holy Spirit, tell the **life-transforming story of Jesus Christ**.

We believe it is critical for our PAOC churches to be **self-governing**. They have been given the right of self-government, an "inherent right to sovereignty in the conduct of their own affairs." It does not equate with being independent or

autonomous, but rather allows for a high level of **local empowerment** and diversity.

We value and respect what makes us uniquely different, knowing that together we are part of a greater body of Pentecostal leaders and congregations across Canada who are called by God to fulfil His mandate to share the good news.

We hold to a statement of faith that unites us, yet we may reach our communities in different ways. Uniquely, we respond to God's leading with freedom to do what He is asking us to do in our geographical settings.

WE ARE THE SAME YET DIFFERENT...

- Each local church calls its own pastor, appoints its own leadership, holds property and sets operational policies.
- Each local church has a membership of committed believers who unite to be salt and light in the mission field of their local community.
- Each local church is given the opportunity to conduct their own affairs, yet has the covering of a district leadership team and national family. Together, we support one another.

With a Charter signed in 1919, our history is rich and has known great kingdom impact for over 100 years. Our archives are filled with countless stories that tell of how we have been better together.

Walk along a river and explore the wetlands. Feel the strength and protection of a riverbank, known as the *riparian zone*. This zone provides stability to moving water, protecting the river and riverbanks by reducing erosion and improving water quality. It provides shelter for animals and fish. Without it, the river is made vulnerable. Similarly, the PAOC works to protect and offer security.



Our Affiliation

Without question, the impact of the river's life multiplies within the banks of affiliation and co-operation.

stability security support

When a church or leader makes a decision to affiliate, it is choosing to become family—making a choice to work in unity with like-minded leaders, local churches and ministries. It is declaring a desire to belong, to be part of the greater whole. When we affiliate, we join together with others. We become connected. We align, moving forward together in the same direction, with purpose and a unity of heart. Strength, stability, shelter, security and support are ours.

Local churches, ministries and credential holders who affiliate find value in the relationship. We affiliate with the PAOC's history, identity and spirituality. We come together in agreement on the PAOC's Statement of Essential Truths and Positions and Practices and hold true to these in our teaching. By affiliating, we bond in

structure and governance through local church, district and national constitutions. Affiliation also allows pastors and leaders to hold credentials with the district in which they are located, providing them with a direct, accountable and privileged relationship, as set out in the General Constitution and By-Laws. Credential holders hold to a Ministerial Code of Ethics. We choose to be accountable to one other. That's what family does.

As we choose relationship with the PAOC, local churches participate in commitment to the shared vision, core values and mission of the Fellowship. We care about the **spiritual, missional and theological vitality** of the family. We are accountable to one another for sound doctrine. We equip one another in the call to make disciples. We declare publicly that **we are in community**.

WE WORK TOGETHER, SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER...

- In our shared missional initiatives, including church planting and church revitalization.
- Through leader and church development (Bible colleges, district facilitated initiatives, conferences and events, online mentoring, visits and consultations).
- As we care for fellow leaders and churches when needs arise in times of transition, bereavement, restoration and conflict resolution.
- Administratively and through our Fellowship services (credentials, legal and government processes, constitutions, credentialed leadership, and organizational functions).

Simply put, we are better together.

When we choose to embrace a shared vision and mission, we know that our own local church is living out the Great Commission.

Together, we are making disciples in our Jerusalem (locally), in our Judea (districts and regionally), in our Samaria (across our nation and through Mission Canada) and to the outermost parts of the earth (through our Mission Global endeavours).

Truly, we are

better together.



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