

# Reaching Francophone Canada



## *Francophone Church Planting Partnership Manual*

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## **Preamble –**

*In the Pauline Epistles we clearly see the New Testament pattern of interdependency and partnerships being worked out in order to advance the work of spreading the Gospel. We see mature, stable churches providing leadership, funding and practical help to churches in need... while those congregations in turn give back through prayer, encouragement and help as they are able. Our vision is to see those kinds of dynamic partnerships being replicated between English-speaking churches and individuals from across Canada and French-speaking reproducing churches and church plants both in Quebec and our nation's other francophone regions.*

## **A. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**

### **1. Our Past Funding Model –**

#### ***“Long-term investment in our mission field next door.”***

- \* The **Fellowship French Mission** was founded in 1958 during the persecution years in Quebec.
- \* Has enabled hundreds of churches and individuals to prayerfully and sacrificially support a great host of dedicated missionaries both in Quebec and beyond for more than six decades.
- \* Has given front-line help and support in the planting of almost 100 French-speaking congregations.
- \* In 2009 a strategic decision was taken to change the Fellowship French Mission model, and to implement a 5-year transition process that would culminate in the introduction of a new funding model.
- \* Great care was taken to ensure that the missionaries serving with the Fellowship French Mission are well cared for. Individualized transition plans were carefully and sensitively prepared for every missionary couple that began their missionary service prior to the 5-year transition process (Jan. '10 – December '14).
- \* All new church planting couples that began their service during the 5-year transition process (Jan. '10-Dec. '14) now serve under the auspices of the AÉBÉQ Region and continued to do so beyond January 2015. The financial support for these church planting couples given by churches and individual donors from outside Quebec, continued to flow through Fellowship National beyond January 2015.
- \* The Fellowship French Mission formally drew to a close as a Fellowship agency and ministry on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2014.

### **2. Our Present Reality in Quebec –**

#### ***“A mature region in the least-reached mission field in North America.”***

- \* In 1971 a visionary decision was taken to organize our 17 struggling francophone churches into their very own region of churches known as AÉBÉQ (Association d'Églises Baptistes Évangéliques au Québec).

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- \* Since then we have seen supernatural growth (all to the glory of God), and today AÉBÉQ is a mature region numbering around 80 churches, with excellent French Canadian leadership ably supported by our church-based seminary known as SEMBEQ.

***“In the least-reached mission field in North America...”***

- \* Today there are about 9,000 believers that worship every Sunday in our AÉBÉQ churches. That’s good news... yet the stark reality still remains that the other 6,000,000 francophones living in Quebec—plus 488,000 in Ontario, 233,000 in New Brunswick and 100,000 in Manitoba—are still largely unreached with the Gospel.
- \* Less than 1% of francophones living in Quebec, and about 1% living beyond Quebec identify themselves as evangelical Christians.
- \* Missiologists tell us that until the number of evangelical Christians within a people group reaches the 2-3% threshold, a church planting movement will struggle to maintain momentum and struggle to accomplish the entire mission on their own.
- \* The stark reality is that few from beyond our borders are seeking to reach the francophone population in Quebec and the rest of Canada... so that vital mission continues to rest on our shoulders as Fellowship churches.

### **3. Our New Funding Model –**

***“From missionary support to strategic partnerships with francophone churches and church plants.”***

- \* Fellowship churches and individual donors from across Canada are now encouraged to engage in collaborative relationships with francophone churches and church plants through direct and strategic partnerships that could potentially involve the sharing of resources, work teams, mutual prayer support, etc.
- \* These strategic partnerships will be brokered by Fellowship National and managed by the Church Planting Director in the region where the francophone church plant is located.
- \* When the supporting Fellowship church and the francophone church are located in the same Region, the financial support for the church will flow directly through that region. However, when the Fellowship church and the francophone church are not located in the same Region, the financial support will flow through Fellowship National.

## **B. OUR FELLOWSHIP’S NEW FRANCOPHONE MISSION MANDATE –**

The key concept in our paradigm shift for this new Fellowship initiative is summed up in the word “partnership”. When we use this term “partnership” we truly mean that “we’re in this together.”

Our immediate objective is clear... it is to inspire and encourage our English-speaking churches and our faithful team of individual donors to continue to engage in partnering with and funding francophone church plants so that an even greater harvest of souls will be gathered in the years ahead! Our ultimate objective is to reach a point in Quebec and the other French-speaking regions of Canada where at least 2% of the population self-identify as “evangelical”, and the AÉBÉQ region “has sufficient strength to sustain and ensure the continuous multiplication of churches”. But, we’ll be reaching those vital goals with God’s help...in partnership together!

## 1. Clearly focused on Quebec

The truth is that Quebec is still very much a mission field and must remain a vital ministry focus for our Fellowship of churches. While the AÉBÉQ region has matured and the Fellowship French Mission dissolved, the stark reality is that the spiritual needs in Quebec are still staggering. When the spiritual needs of Quebec are contrasted with other countries in which our Fellowship is involved (see note below), it becomes self-evident that this is still one of the neediest, least-reached people groups in the world... and they are right next door!

Because of our proximity and our history, our Fellowship of churches and our faithful donors from across our nation have a unique responsibility and opportunity to support church planting among francophones. It is crystal clear that church planting in Quebec has been and will continue to be the most effective way to reach new people and new communities with the Gospel.

i.e. Fellowship International missionaries are serving in:

Kenya (48.9%) Honduras (23.0%); D.R. Congo (18.7%); Chile (18.4%);  
Canada (7.7%); Indonesia (5.6%); Colombia (7.5%); India (2.2%);  
Belgium (1.2%); Bulgaria (1.9%); Italy (1.1%); France (1.0%); Quebec (0.8%);  
Cambodia (1.6%); Japan (0.5%); Pakistan (0.6%); Poland (0.3%)

—Stats from Operation World

## 2. And to the rest of Francophone Canada –

Our new partnership strategy will continue to focus primarily on Quebec where 85% (i.e. more than 6,000,000) of Canada’s francophones live... however, we will also focus on the other French-speaking regions of our country. Among the 15% (i.e. more than 1,000,000 francophones living outside of Quebec) 488,000 live in Ontario; 233,000 in New Brunswick; 100,000 in Manitoba... plus smaller populations are present in our other six provinces. It is our sincere hope and expectation that dynamic church planting partnerships will be developed between English-speaking congregations and/or individual donors and francophone church plants across our nation!

## C. OUR PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY –

### 1. **The Plan:** $7 \times 7 = 1$ Yes, we know... the math doesn’t work, but the plan will!

\* It involves: 7 church partners and/or individual partners. Fellowship National has the responsibility to prayerfully seek out and find churches or individual donors to partner with regionally-approved francophone mother churches and/or their church planting projects.

- \* 7 Years – Fellowship Regions have the responsibility to manage and encourage these partnerships between churches or individual donors and francophone churches within their region. These partnerships will be in place for seven (7) years with the possibility of a three (3) year extension.
- \* 1 Francophone Church Plant – Our partnership objective will be to see each francophone church plant develop and mature into an autonomous self-governing; self-supporting and self-propagating local church to the glory of God!

### **A Strategic Exception – minority francophone communities in English Canada**

The above-mentioned plan is primarily intended to facilitate church planting projects both in Quebec and across Canada, in communities where the francophone population is a significant majority. However, in keeping with the national scope of Francophone Ministry, the Fellowship (in partnership with the French Region) would like to encourage churches in predominantly English-speaking communities, to intentionally reach out to any significant francophone minorities that exist within their area. These initiatives may or may not ultimately result in the planting of a local francophone church, but in order to qualify for assistance, they would need to be an intentional francophone ministry targeted at a significant francophone minority.

Personnel, expertise, resources and funding could be made available according to an agreed upon plan for these local initiatives. At some point these local initiatives could be further developed into launch teams for a francophone church plant, or they could become a francophone congregation within the structure of the initiating church.

## **2. Partnership Models –**

### **a) Church Partnership Options -**

The level of commitment within each partnership will be determined by the leadership of the English-speaking Fellowship church in close consultation with the francophone mother church and Regional Church Planting Director. The two possible levels of partnerships being recommended are...

- i) **A Co-operating Church Partnership** – At this level, the Fellowship church prays for and financially supports the francophone church plant. Creative joint initiatives will be encouraged so that the two church families get to know each other and pray for one another.
- ii) **A Collaborating Church Partnership** – At this level, the relationship/partnership will go well beyond the previous level of engagement. The two churches will co-ordinate projects together to build their relationship through pulpit exchanges, language exchanges in French or English, work teams, earnest prayer support, training, etc.

### **b) Church Partnership Models –**

#### **i) Church Plant Model:**

Region approves French church plants with Regional assessed/approved church planter. Fellowship National brokers partners outside Region, while the Region brokers partners inside the Region. The Region manages these partnerships.

## **ii) Mother Church Model:**

Region approves a Mother Church as she daughters a new Francophone church plant. Fellowship National brokers partners outside the Region, while the Region brokers partners inside the Region. The Region manages these partnerships. Strategically, the AÉBÉQ Region is primarily using this model, encouraging partnerships with Mother (Antioch) churches involved in church planting projects.

## **iii) Project Model (i.e. Abitibi Project):**

The Region identifies strategic areas in their Region needing special Gospel penetration among Francophones. A project is established in concert with Fellowship National. A nation-wide fundraising campaign is created, launched and administered by Fellowship National. All funds sent to the Fellowship National office go to the Regional project, less an assessment for Fellowship National's administrative costs.

## **c) Individual Partnerships –**

Partnerships between individual donors and francophone church plants will also be brokered by our National President or his representative. The Regional Church Planting Director will be responsible to manage and encourage these strategic partnerships, and will act as a “go-between” for the individual partner and francophone church planter when needed. The francophone church planter will be responsible to communicate regularly (every 8 weeks) with the individual partner in order to maintain contact and encourage prayer support. The individual partner will be responsible to pray, to give, and to do all in their power to encourage the francophone church plant... including making an on-site visit if possible.

# **D. PARTNERSHIP EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES –**

**1. Fellowship National:** The Fellowship National will be responsible to promote our new Francophone Ministry mandate across our nation, identify interested partners, broker the partnerships, and act as a trans-regional funding mechanism for trans-regional partnerships.

**2. Fellowship Regions:** Fellowship Regions will be responsible to identify (in close consultation with potential mother churches) church plant locations and potential church planters. They will be responsible to oversee and manage their francophone church plants, and the church and individual partnerships that have been established with the church plants.

\*The AÉBÉQ Church Planting Director will be available to counsel and consult with other Regional Church Planting Directors with respect to their regional francophone church plants.

**3. Fellowship Partners:** Church partners and/or individual partners will be responsible for prayer, finances and providing other resources to the francophone partner church plant while developing an intentional partnership/relationship over the period of the partnership.

**4. Fellowship Church Plants:** The francophone church plant is responsible before the Lord to become a self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating local Fellowship Baptist Church within 7-10 years. They will maintain regular communication with their church/individual partners in order to sustain effective prayer support for their ministries. They are also expected to provide or be committed to...

**a) Committed Church Planting Pastor:** A church planting pastor must cooperate with regional requirements willingly, including an expectation that the pastor will person-



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ally give a tithe of his income to the new church, will ensure that the church plant gives the recommended percentage of its operating budget to the Region, and cooperates fully with the Region and Fellowship National in every way (e.g., participating in events, providing any information requested, giving access to people for communication, etc.).

- b) Large Enough Launch Team:** The number of households required for the plant to be eligible for Fellowship National funding will be determined for each plant on a case-by-case basis.
- c) Outside Supervision:** Each church plant receiving Fellowship National funds must be under the supervision of the Region or one or more parenting churches in the Region until it transitions to self-support. Progressive autonomy will be linked to progressive self-support. When released to full self-government, the new church will commit itself to continuing strong participation with the Region and with Fellowship National, including multiplication of more new churches.
- d) Parenting Churches:** For a church plant to be eligible for Fellowship National funding, one or more churches in the Region must serve as a parenting church with a significant commitment of people and/or dollars to the new church plant. These parenting churches need not be located near the new church plant, though that is ideal.
- e) Regional Responsibility:** The Region is primarily responsible for coordinating and supporting the multiplication of new churches in their Region. This responsibility will include the training of church planters and individuals within the region for each church plant. Fellowship Regions will receive an assessment from funds raised to cover administrative costs for new church plants created in their Region and supported by partner churches within their Region.
- f) Regional Budgeting:** Where applicable, Regions will establish individual budgets for each church plant. These budgets will provide descending grants with each passing year of the seven (7) year partnership.

Any accumulated financial support will remain in the church plant's designated account and be used for future daughter works planted by the original church plant.

In the event the original church plant fails, closes or does not plant a church within seven (7) years, the balance of the church plant's support account will be distributed to other francophone church plants at the discretion of the Region.

- g) National Responsibility:** Fellowship National will raise start-up funds from outside the region only in partnership with the Region raising start-up funds from inside the region. Fellowship National will receive an assessment from funds raised outside the Region to cover costs for staff and promotion. Fellowship National will only seek partnerships for new church plants approved by the Region.
- h) Coaching:** For a church plant to be eligible for Fellowship National funding, the planter must be provided with a successful church planting coach approved by the Region.
- i) Mission Giving:** From the time of the first worship service forward, the new church plant will give the recommended percentage to the Region and be challenged to support Fellowship National ministries. It is important to put this practice into the DNA of the church from the very beginning. Otherwise, the church will see mission giving as something to do if there is extra money available rather than an essential practice of the church. Mission giving to non-Fellowship organizations is discouraged during the first three years that a church plant is receiving Fellowship funding.

**j) Training:** For a church plant to be eligible for Fellowship National funding, the planter must complete an intensive training course for church planting approved by the Region.

**k) Assessment:** For a church plant to be eligible for Fellowship National funding, the planter must be thoroughly assessed and recommended as a church planter through a church planter assessment process that is approved by the Region.

## **E. THE PARTNERSHIP PROCESS —**

### **Step #1 – The Initial Contact**

Normally at this early point in the partnership process, the initial contact will either come from –

- a. an interested church or donor getting in touch with the National President or his representative to discuss the possibilities of becoming involved in a potential partnership with a francophone church plant, or...
- b. the initial contact may also be initiated by the President or his representative with a potential church or donor that demonstrates a heart for the francophone work.

### **Step #2 – The In-Depth Discussion**

At this point, a meeting will be arranged (either by video or in person) between the President or his rep and the potential church or individual partner. The purpose of this meeting will be to clearly lay out the –

- a. responsibilities of a partner;
- b. opportunities in a partnership.

This meeting will certainly be followed by a time of serious reflection and prayer as God's will is clearly sought concerning a potential partnership. In order to assist with the decision-making process, it could be possible for the lead pastor or individual donor to actually visit the francophone church plant (or planter) should they wish to do so. Regularly scheduled Vision Tours now take place annually in early June and October.

### **Step #3 – The Partnership Decision**

After prayerful consideration, a francophone church plant will be chosen by the church or individual partner. Normally that decision will be communicated by the National President or his rep through the Regional Church Planting Director to the francophone church planting team.

### **Step #4 – The Partnership Agreement**

At this point (if possible) a virtual or on-site meeting will be set up between representatives of the church or individual partner and the francophone church plant (plus the mother church where applicable), facilitated by national and regional representatives. During this strategic meeting, the relationship will be initiated; expectations will be defined and the partnership agreement will be formally signed and celebrated!



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## **Step #5 – The Partnership Agreement Lived out**

True partnerships are based on initiative, relationships and mutual trust. Each Regional Church Planting Director will do what they can to facilitate each partnership within their region once they have been established. However, a true partnership will only be successful if both parties not only are committed to, but are prepared to make it a priority through mutual, creative relationship building. The management of these partnerships falls to the Regional Church Planting Director of each Region.

Once the partnership is established, funding from the church or individual partner to the francophone church plant...

- a. will flow through Fellowship National if the partnership is trans-regional;
- b. will flow through the Fellowship Region if the church or individual partner and francophone church plant are in the same region.