

# FELLOWSHIP DUBAI

## *Church Profile*



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# FELLOWSHIP DUBAI CHURCH PROFILE

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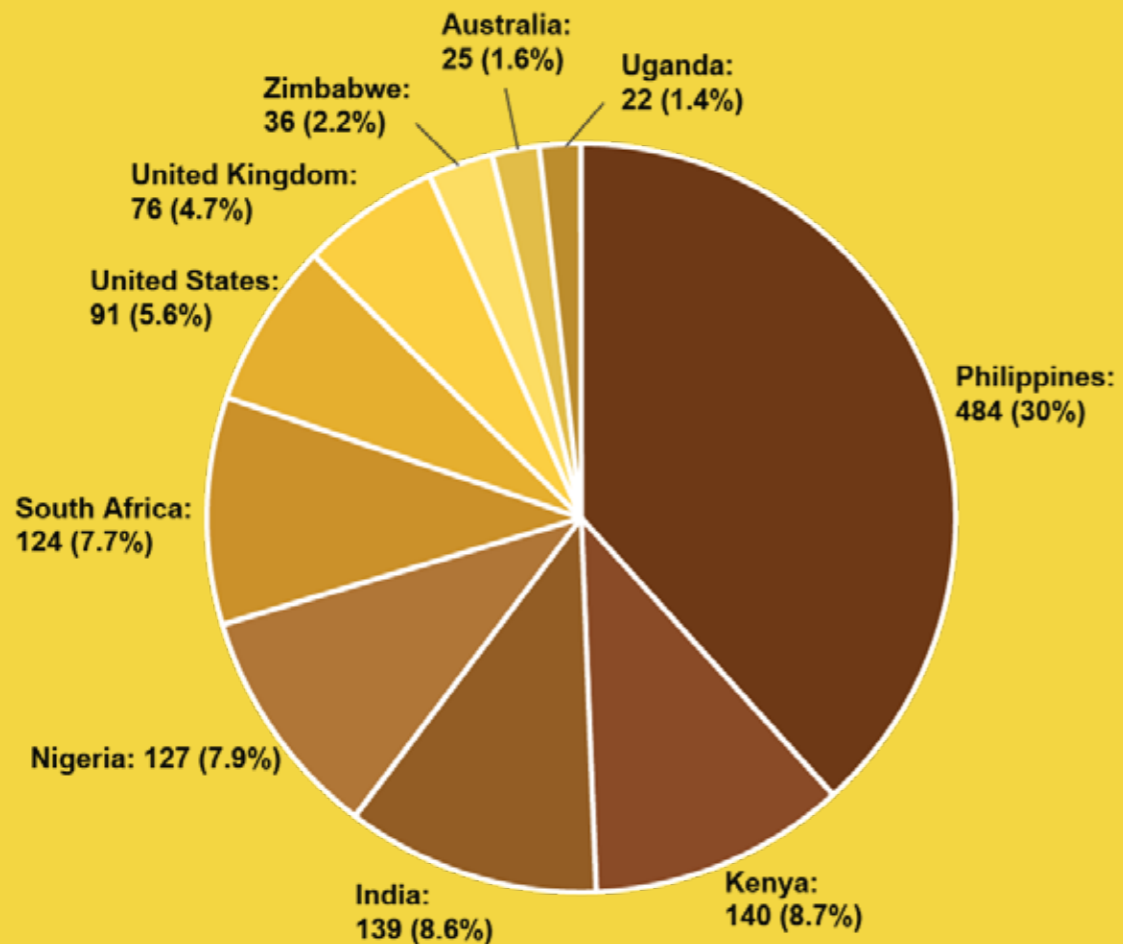
## INTRODUCTION

Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, is a global city like no other. With over 80%, it has the largest expat population of any city in the world. More than 3 million people from 180 countries.

Dubai's transient expat population and geographic location means it is uniquely situated as a base from which to make disciples from every nation and to impact the world.

Fellowship is unique in that almost everyone who comes, will leave within 5 or 10 years as they return to their home country. We are constantly sending people from all nations to all nations. We have a limited window in which to prepare them as disciples making disciples ready to serve in Dubai and beyond.





# OUR CONTEXT & CULTURE

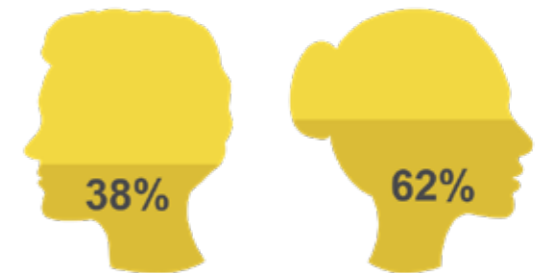
## a. UAE/Dubai Context

Fellowship Church Dubai originates and is located in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the Emirate of Dubai. The UAE is a Middle Eastern Muslim country governed by a federal elective constitutional monarchy based on the practise of civil, criminal and Sharia Law. Dubai is however, a very open Muslim emirate in that it is highly international - in 2015 Dubai was reported as the most cosmopolitan city in the world, having 83% of its population foreign-born.

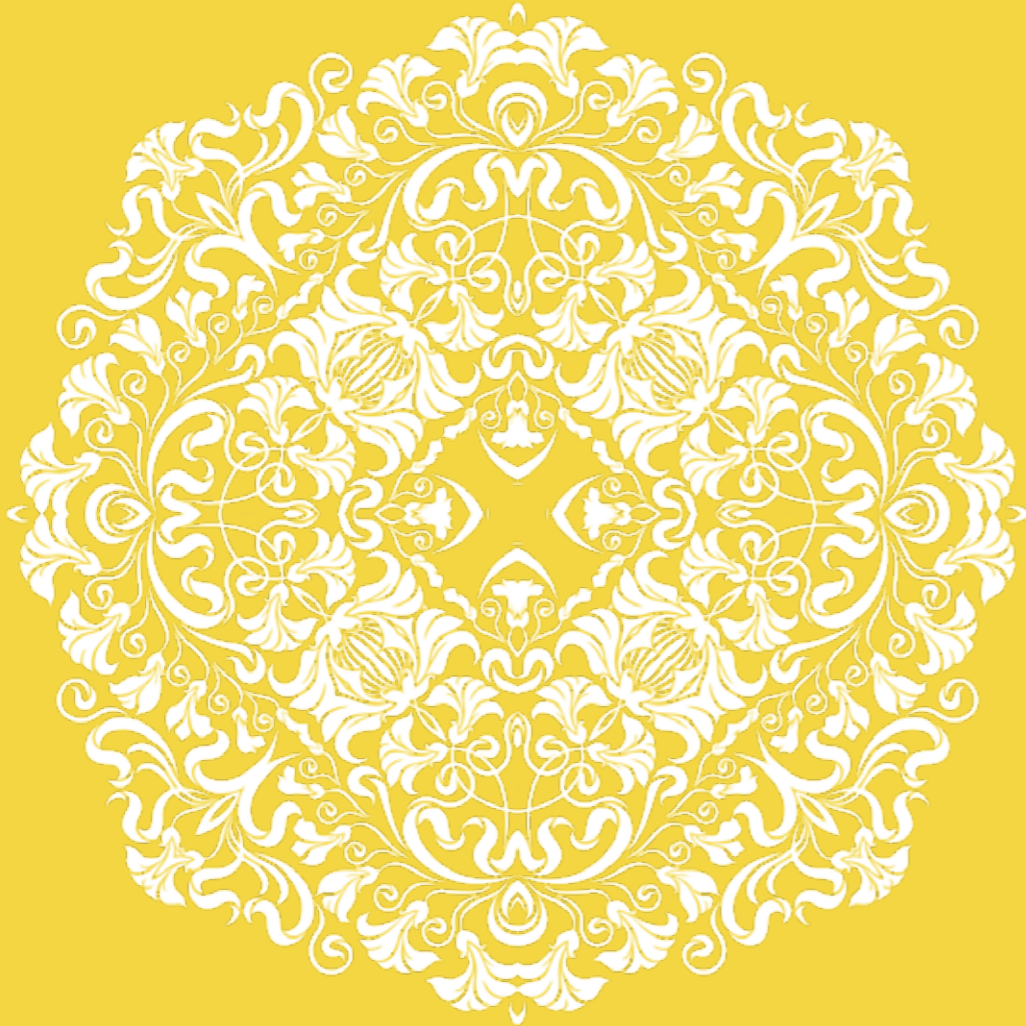
Dubai is a melting pot of many different cultures, with high percentages of Indian (43%), Pakistani (17%), and Filipino (4%) nationalities. The culture in Dubai reflects a strongly Western influence, especially with its historic links to the United Kingdom. The practise of other religions is openly and warmly welcomed and the government operates a Ministry of Tolerance.

## b. Church Culture & Context

Fellowship Church is an international church with over 85 nationalities and a myriad more cultures who speak hundreds of different languages. It is very much a taste of Revelation 7. We come from collective and individualistic cultures. Dubai is a young city and this is re-lected in our church demographic. 80% of our adults are between 25 and 50. Unusually, a significant proportion are either single or living away from their families, with only those on medium to higher incomes able to bring spouses and children with them.



● < 2% (Others)



## OUR CONTEXT & CULTURE

Most of us are foreign workers, living away from family and community, so doing life together is incredibly important and strong bonds are created by the gospel across our ethnic diversity. We experience high transience which reflects the nature of the country with many expats staying only 3-5 years.

We are a church currently structured and led from a Western model, the senior leadership being largely Western. This is not a reflection of our long-term desire.

### c. Church Relationships

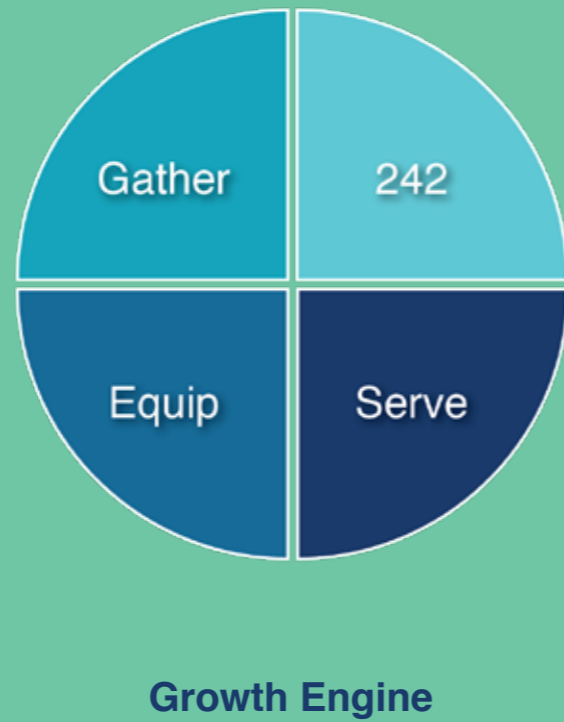
Fellowship also has a heart to engage with various people and organisations outside Fellowship.

We seek to foster unity amongst all the churches in Dubai and the UAE, and support and serve them as much as we can.

We are recognised by the Government by belonging to the Council of Evangelical Churches, through whom we receive our staff visas.

We also desire to serve the Government of the UAE and always be working towards harmonious relationships with them.





? ✓ + X

- Accepts Jesus
- Bible
- Community
- Disciples others
- Everything



**Growth Grid**

## WHO WE ARE

### a. Our Vision

We are a church for people who think they don't like church, so we can help them come to know a God they think they don't need, tell them about Jesus, train and equip them, and send them back to their home countries to carry the message of the gospel.

### b. Our Fellowship Flow/Growth Engine

Our Fellowship Flow consists of 3 parts. Our DNA which flows through everything we do, our Growth Engine which drives our growth in maturity in Christ and our Growth Grid which helps us to identify how we are growing towards maturity.

#### Our DNA is made up of 6 core values and they shape our ministries and conversations:

1. The Bible is God's word and is our source of truth.
2. The gospel of grace and forgiveness is offered to all.
3. We pray at all times about all things because God answers prayer.
4. All are welcome and everyone has a place at Fellowship.
5. We're committed to the dignity of all people and putting compassion into action.
6. We don't take ourselves too seriously and aren't afraid to laugh at ourselves.

After trusting in Jesus, we encourage everyone at Fellowship to engage in Our Growth Engine. It consists of 4 parts, each of which is essential for and contributes asymmetrically to an individual's growth in maturity in Christ.

1. We gather to hear from God, respond to him, and introduce our friends and colleagues to Him.
2. We meet in 242 small groups where we discover together what it means to be a follower of Jesus who makes multiplying disciples, as we study the Bible together.
3. We learn in Equip for Life conferences and courses by going deeper into God's word so that we can be equipped to carry the gospel message throughout Dubai and beyond.
4. We serve as Jesus did – we serve God, we serve one another, and we serve our community.

Our Growth Grid helps each of us to observe our spiritual growth towards maturity in Christ. Maturity we define as being a multiplying follower of Jesus in 5 key areas: (ABCD and E).

A mature follower of Jesus:

#### ACCEPTS

Jesus' as Lord and Saviour.

#### BIBLE

is zealous to read the Bible personally and with others.

#### COMMUNITY

faithfully serves and shares in biblical community with Jesus-followers.

#### DISCIPLESHIP

whole heartedly obeys Jesus's command to multiply disciples wherever they go.

#### EVERYTHING

understands that every resource belongs to God and uses everything they have been given for His purposes and glory.

## WHO WE ARE

There are four major stages of development at Fellowship:

### ? Exploration

“Do I want this for me?” Someone in this stage is seeking God – They ask questions and we point them to answers from God’s word. Fellowship is a safe place to not know what one believes, and all people from all nations and demographics are wel-come.

### ✓ Revelation

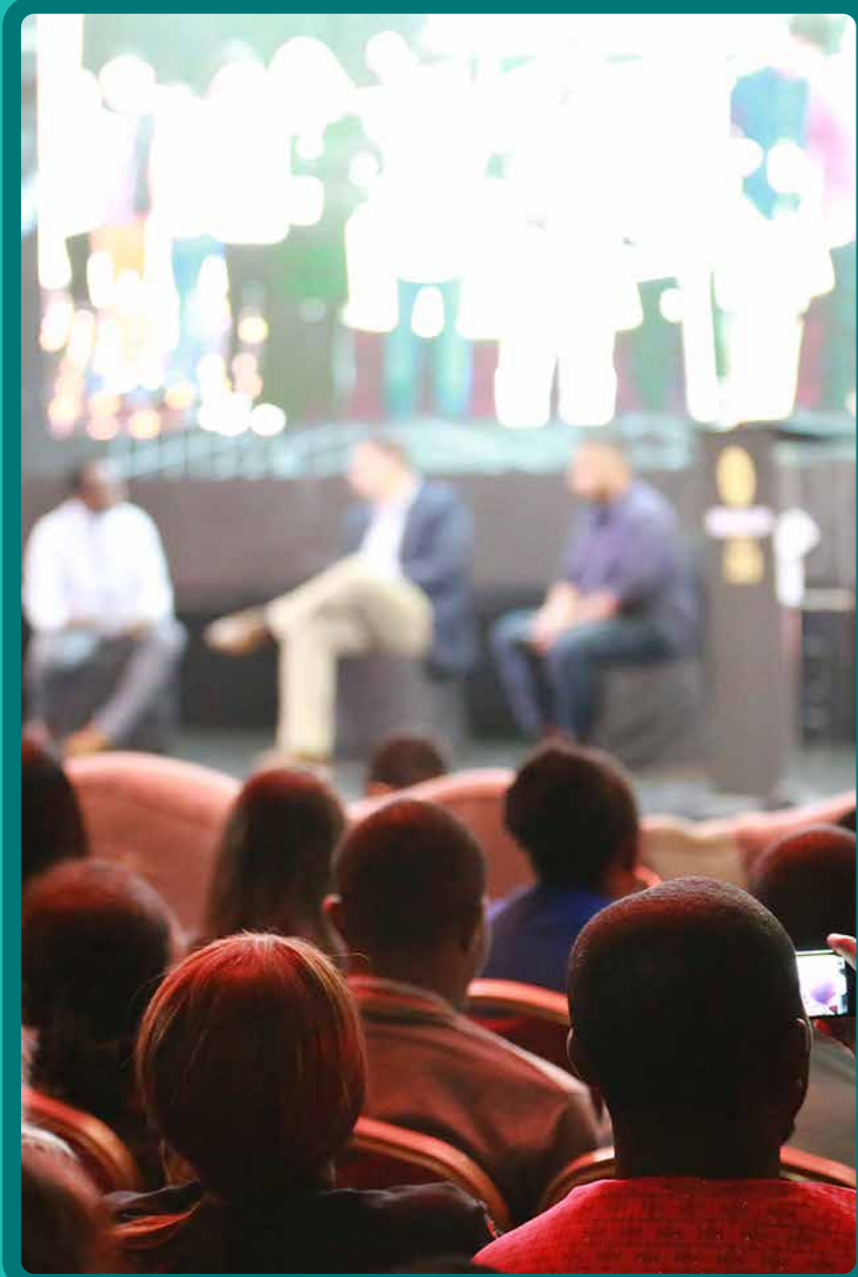
Someone in this stage responds to God’s revelation of the gospel to them: “Yes! I want this for me!” – They put their trust in Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Parts of their life begin to reflect the lordship of Jesus.

### + Addition

“I want this for you” – After experiencing the transformative power of the Gospel, people in this stage want to invite friends to experience the truth. People in addition share the gospel regularly with their friends and neighbours.

### X Multiplication

“I want you to want this for others” This is the goal of growing in maturity: Disciples who make disciples who make disciples. People in this stage not only share their faith but train others to train others to share.



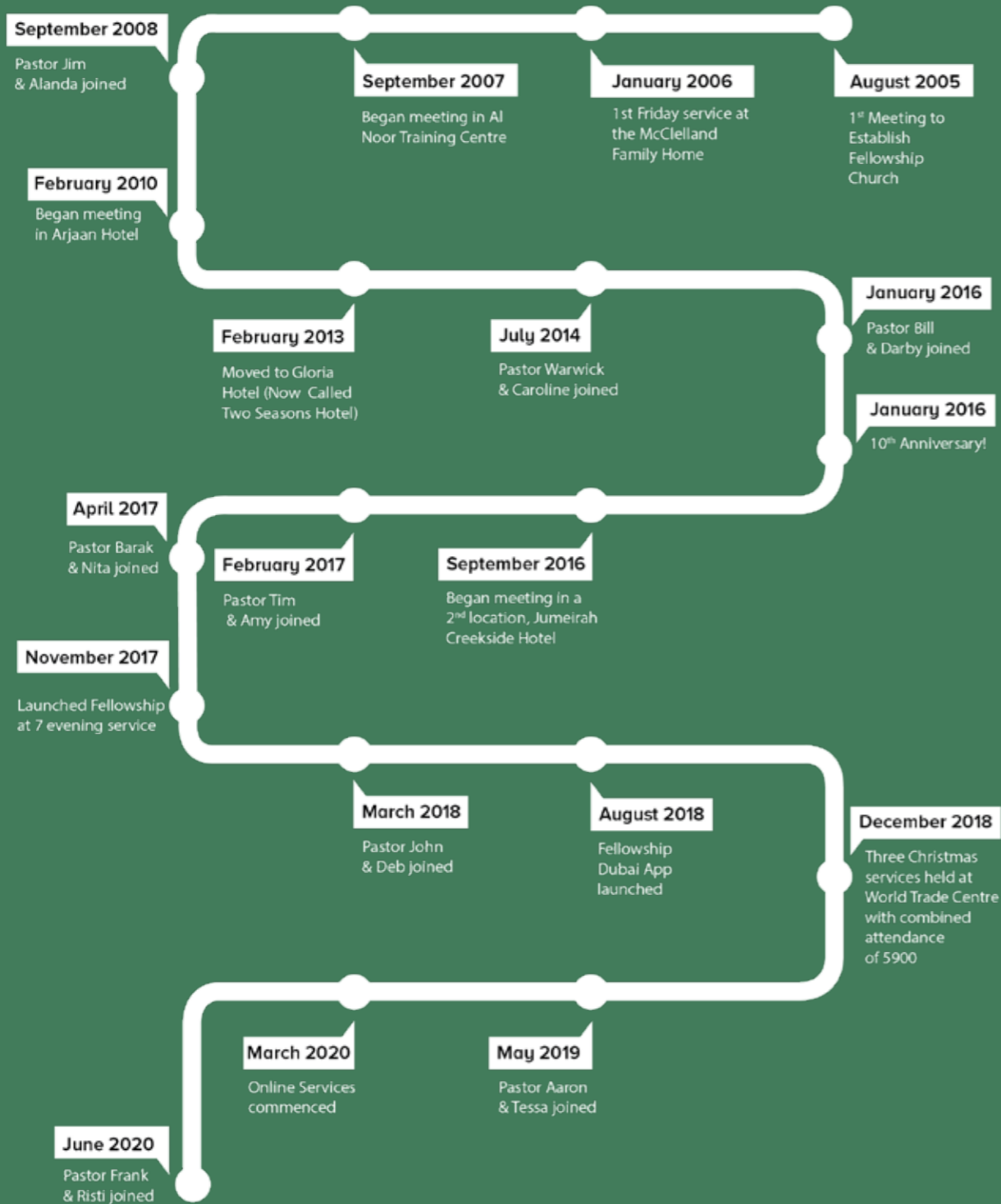
## OUR THEOLOGY

At Fellowship we make sure we are centred on the Gospel (the key elements that determine where we stand in relation to God), and that we are not bound by secondary or tertiary issues. We respect the theological differences and views that exist in our church recognising there are many different theological backgrounds within the Fellowship community; and our goal is to unite around the major elements of the Gospel – the centrality of Christ’s atoning sacrifice on the Cross as the only means of salvation and restoration of relationship with God. We uphold God’s word as the infallible and authoritative source of truth when we encounter differing perspectives.

*(See Addendum 1 for our Statement of Faith and Doctrine.)*



# TIMELINE



# OUR HISTORY

Fellowship started as a small home Bible study group in 2005 as part of Emirates Baptist Church International (EBCI), meeting in the home of the McClelland family. This group had a strong sense of community and an outreach emphasis, with a vision for reaching many nations with the Gospel. It grew quickly to 10 families. After discussion with EBCI the group decided to constitute itself as a church in January 2006.

In late 2007 they decided to look for a Pastor and in January 2008 they advertised in various countries and places. Jim & Alanda Burgess arrived in September 2008 for 6 weeks to investigate the opportunity. After returning to the US, they accepted the offer in November 2008, and arrived in February 2009. By 2019 over 4,000 people were attending each Friday in 6 services over 2 hotels, with 35 employed staff.

In March 2020 the outbreak of Covid19 brought the closure of in-person services and activities until November 2020. Church services moved online. Many people left the UAE during this time with an estimated 20% of the church leaving. The concept of online church had been part of Fellowship's long term planning for many years, but was now accelerated by Covid19. We saw many people joining online services from other countries, both regular members who had returned home as well as new people joining from other countries and in Dubai.

Other online ministries continued to grow: Equip classes, 242 small groups, 242 leader training, all saw good increases in numbers, and Fellowship Christmas online services saw over 90,000 hits [youtu.be/rll\\_05OJBdU](https://youtu.be/rll_05OJBdU). From 27 November 2020 to 22 January 2021 in-person services resumed in a modified form (30 minute services, only 2 services per hotel, strict Covid19 regulations observed) for 9 weeks. We saw 1,700 people attend these services while many continued attending online services.

# FELLOWSHIP STAFF

Fellowship Church is an independent non-denominational church, and the government and spiritual oversight of the Church is vested in the Eldership (as defined in the Constitution) for the benefit of the body of believers who are part of it. The vision and spiritual direction of the church is determined by the Senior Pastor (in conjunction with the Eldership) and with the input and collaboration of the Fellowship Staff.



# OUR GOVERNANCE LEADERSHIP STAFF & MINISTRIES

We have ministries that are designed to reach across the spectrum of ages, cultures, genders and interests. Individual ministries are shaped by the Fellowship flow and usually focus on one part of the growth engine to see the lost saved and then brought to maturity.

## FELLOWSHIP MINISTRIES



## THE FELLOWSHIP INNOVATIONS

Fellowship from its inception has been committed to creatively and innovatively seeking to see the lost saved. This means that we are prepared to try just about anything we can to see people come into contact with Jesus. This approach saw us pave the way for other churches in Dubai with a series of firsts. We were the first church to meet regularly in a hotel for Friday worship. We were also the first to use the World Trade Centre as the venue of our Christmas outreach. We also were the first church given permission to house our offices outside of a compound. We've hosted Senator Manny Pacquiao, a legend in our Filipino community, for an evangelistic meeting, and our Easter Sunday services for thousands are held on the beach at sunrise. In 2019 Fellowship introduced the churches of Dubai to Movement Day. We continue to spear-head this key initiative designed to gather churches, their leaders, as well as key community thinkers and entrepreneurs to make strategic decisions that will see Dubai and the region hear the good news.

## OUR CHALLENGES

Fellowship has amplified challenges that many international churches face, and a few that are unique to Dubai.

a. High turnover: Because of the transient nature of expats, and the quickly-changing pace of Dubai, Fellowship experiences a higher than average turnover rate for international churches. While the trend may be extending the time, pre-Covid expected engagement with Fellowship ministry was 18 months to 3 years.

b. Shifting financial/giving base: Fellowship has seen God's faithful provision, but we do recognise an economic shift in Dubai. With a decrease in average salaries we anticipate a reduction in overall giving.

c. Multi-Everything: Various people from various traditions and cultures is a taste of Revelation 7, but it does present challenges. Fellowship has a diverse range of theological perspectives, hermeneutics, and cultural lenses.

d. Application of Fellowship Flow: The diversity of church backgrounds lends itself to a general assumption that church is about the gathering on Friday. Fellowship sees the gathering as important but equally important are the other 3 parts of the growth engine. While we do have aspirations of living out the Fellowship Flow, turning this into an actualised organisational value still presents challenges.

e. Recruiting/growing Staff: Because of the unique need Fellowship has for staff, we have found hiring theologically-trained, Gospel-centred, ethnically diverse staff a challenge. While not unique to Fellowship and common in other international churches, the quality and diversity of our staff to match the shifting demographics in Dubai are vital to the future of Fellowship. Developing the Ministry Apprenticeship program is crucial to growing future staff for Fellowship and the International church movement.

f. Dubai-specific, post-covid: Relationships with government officials is decent right now, but the ongoing challenge of receiving permission to have events is a challenge. Covid and Dubai's response poses a need to rethink ministry strategy as well as efficacy. The need to innovate and re-innovate adapting to the quick pace of change in Dubai is challenging.

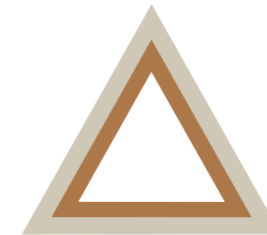
Post Expo 2021, we anticipate the need to change and innovate to increase after because Dubai will most likely be a very different place.



## OUR FUTURE VISION

It is our desire, under God, to continue to reach people in our area. We seek to plant and grow more Fellowship communities here in Dubai, while also looking to plant in other Emirates, and beyond to neighbouring countries in the region. This may initially take the form of new smaller sites in other parts of Dubai, while continuing to grow our current sites until they reach full capacity.

We also desire to equip and train people to share the gospel with, and train, others in Dubai and their home countries. We want to make disciples who make disciples who make disciples. The method to achieve these two goals will focus primarily on the development of leader training & the concept of multiplication as outlined in 3b above. In 10 years we expect, God willing, for Fellowship to be a network of connected churches throughout the region, with numerous sites in Dubai.



## **Addendum 1**

### **Statement of Faith and Doctrine**

#### **Scripture**

At Fellowship of the Emirates, we believe the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of man and the divine and final authority for all Christian faith, life and conduct.

*2 Tim. 3:16 | Eph. 6:17 | Isa. 28:16*

*1 Cor. 3:11*

#### **One God**

We believe in one God, creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

*Col. 1:15-20, Acts 11:15-18, Mat. 16:15-17, Gal. 4:6, Acts 2:33, Luke 3:21-22*

#### **Jesus Christ**

We believe in the full deity of Jesus Christ; that He was born of a virgin, conceived by the Holy Spirit, and, as such, is God perfectly manifested in the flesh; that He died on the cross, a perfect and complete sacrifice, in our stead and for our sins according to the Scriptures. He arose bodily from the dead, and ascended into heaven where at the right hand of the Majesty on high, He is now our High Priest and Advocate.

*John 1:6-14 | John 1:17-18 | Mat. 1:18-23*

*Isa. 9:6 | Col. 2:8-10 | Mark 16:19*

*Acts 2:33-36 | Mat. 28:1-10 | Rom. 8:26-27*

#### **The Holy Spirit**

We believe in the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit whose ministry is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and during this age to convict of sin and regenerate the sinner upon believing in Christ, at the time of regeneration baptising the believer into the one body of which Christ is the head; and to indwell, guide, instruct, fill and empower the believer for godly living and service.

*Rom. 8:28-30 | Rom. 12:1-2 | Psalms 32:8*

*Heb. 13:20-21*

#### **Sin**

We believe that man was directly created by God in His own image, that all men are sinners by choice and by nature and, as such stand condemned before God. The entire human race is, therefore, lost and only through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, and regeneration of the Holy Spirit, can salvation and spiritual life be obtained.

*Gen. 1:27 | Col. 3:10 | Judg. 1:15*

*1 Tim. 1:15-17 | Luke 5:32 | Acts 20:21*

*Acts 4:12 | 1 Thes. 5:9 | 2 Thes. 2:13*

#### **Hope**

We believe in the personal, visible, bodily and imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ to complete His saving purpose and to fulfil the biblical promises, and that this blessed hope has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer.

*Mat. 24:30 | Mat. 24:42 | 2 Pet. 3:10*

*1 Thes. 5:1-2*

#### **Resurrection**

We believe in the bodily resurrection of all the dead, of the believer to everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord, and of the unbeliever to judgment and everlasting and conscious punishment.

*Rev. 20:4-6 | 1 Thes. 4:17 | Acts 24:15*

*1 Cor. 15:21 | Matt. 24:51 | Matt. 25:30*

#### **Salvation**

We believe that the atoning death of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground of justification and salvation for all who believe, and that only such as receive Jesus Christ by personal faith are born of the Holy Spirit and, thus, become children of God.

*Gal 3:24-29 | Rom 5:18-19 | Rom 4:25*

*1 Pet 1:23 | John 3:3*

#### **The Church**

We believe that the church is composed of all such persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of Christ, of which He is the head. We believe the local church is a congregation of believers associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel, observing the ordinances of Christ governed by His laws and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His Word. This will include winning people to Christ, establishing them in the Word of God and disciplining them to reach others.

*1 Cor. 1:9 | John 1:13 | Acts 13:47*

*Mark 1:17 | Matt. 10:1*

#### **Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances to be observed by the church during this present age. They are, however, not to be regarded as means of salvation.

*Matt. 28:16-20 | 1 Cor. 10:16 | 1 Cor. 11:17-34*

*Acts 2:42 | 1 Thes. 5:9 | 2 Tim. 3:15*

*John 14:6*

The Church adopts the doctrinal position that baptism is best carried out at the point of conversion, and by immersion. A person who receives Jesus Christ as Saviour by personal faith and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord shall be received as a candidate for baptism by immersion.

The Church also adopts the doctrinal position that the Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby believers in Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Saviour, through partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine, commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate His Second Coming. The Lord's Supper shall be observed during worship services regularly.

#### **Living to Glorify God**

We believe that all the saved should live in such manner as will honour and glorify and not bring reproach upon their Saviour and Lord, and that it is commanded of God to remain separate from false doctrines and sinful pleasures, practices and associations.

*2 Tim. 1:8-10 | 2 Cor. 9:13 | Rom. 12:2*

*2 Peter 1:4*

#### **Angels and Satan**

We believe in the existence of angels who worship God and minister to believers. We also believe in the existence of Satan, the devil, a fallen angelic being who with his demons opposes God, His people and His work. We believe that Christians today can have victory over Satan and his evil schemes through their identification with Christ who defeated him powerfully and conclusively at the cross.

*Gen 28:12 | Heb. 1:6 | Isa. 14:12*

*Luke 10:18 | 1 Cor. 15:54-55*



FELLOWSHIP

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