

## Independency and the FIEC

*Immanuel Church Brentwood | October 2018*

Two key questions:

- What is independency
- Who are the FIEC?

### What is independency?

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Typically, independency is defined negatively:

- Protestant = not Roman Catholic
- Non-conformist = not 1559 Prayer Book
- Dissenting = not externally appointed leaders/rules
- Separatist = not under authority of 'civil magistrate'
- Wikipedia = not part of any denomination

**Independency, however, is defined by what it is, not what it isn't.**

We believe independency is a biblical model of church government.

Primarily this is about where ultimate authority resides: *inside* or *outside* of the local church, i.e. who makes decisions?

In Scripture we see:

- Jesus is the head of the church (Eph 1.22)
- Apostles are foundational gifts (Eph 2.20)
- Ascended Lord Jesus gives pastors to local church (Eph 4.11)

These local leaders include the entire vocabulary of local church leadership:

- ◆ Elders (Acts 20.17)
- ◆ Overseers/[Bishops] (Acts 20.28)
- ◆ Shepherds (Acts 20.28)

The pattern in Scripture is

- ◆ Plural leaders (Acts 20.17)
- ◆ Equal leaders (1 Tim 4.14)

How do leaders get appointed?

- ◆ Externally in start-ups (Titus 1.5)
- ◆ Internally thereafter (1 Tim 3, c.f. Acts 1/6)

If leaders are appointed *internally* it means that ultimate authority lies in the collective congregation. This truth reinforced in:

- ◆ Matthew 18.15-20
- ◆ 1 Cor 5.1-5
- ◆ Rev 2-3

Westminster Assembly (643-1653) spent several days on this one question. Presbyterians said authority ultimately resided in presbytery. Episcopalians said it resided in the bishop. Independents (e.g. John Owen) said it resided in the congregation.

Independency is a recognition that the church has a right, under Christ, to rule itself.

- ◆ Appoints its own leaders
- ◆ Guards its own membership
- ◆ Disciplines its own rebels
- ◆ Determines its own polity and rule

From the beginning, independents recognised the need for inter-dependency alongside independent government. This is the best way to understand Acts 18.27 or Acts 11.29.

## Who are the FIEC?

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Started 1922 to make gospel connections

- ◆ A fellowship
- ◆ Of independents
- ◆ That are evangelical

We have always been governed collectively by member churches. FIEC centrally has no authority. That resides in the local church.

Independent churches working together to reach Britain for Christ.

We define ourselves by a **statement of faith** and three ethos statements (women in ministry, ecumenicism and view on marriage). For more see [www.fiec.org.uk/about-us/beliefs](http://www.fiec.org.uk/about-us/beliefs).

### 'Facts and figures'

- ◆ Largest conservative evangelical grouping (56,000 members: ReNew churches 42,000 attenders, NFI 30,000 members)
- ◆ 601 churches in England, Scotland and Wales
- ◆ Approx 1 new church plant every three weeks
- ◆ Connected firm of solicitors Edward Connor
- ◆ Central team providing support to leaders
- ◆ Mix of churches

Current strategy:

- ◆ Grow healthy churches
- ◆ Connect FIEC and other churches together
- ◆ Plant new churches

Find out more about some of churches by searching Get-to-know on FIEC website.

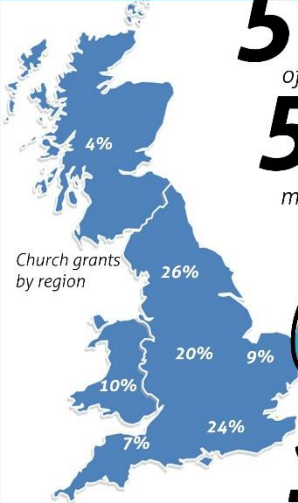
What would be different?

- ◆ Nothing!
- ◆ Access
- ◆ Connections

to individuals

**£425,000**

**57%**  
of grants given to  
**50%**  
most deprived areas



**64**  
individuals

**19**  
colleges supported

20 Schemes **Crosslands**  
**Union** London Seminary **CMTC**  
TEDS **Oak Hill** RTS  
UMP **Cornhill**  
Moorlands

**62** grants given to places of  
**<100**

**49** churches

**£960,000**  
to churches

Data to Sep 2018

**New Affiliations (since 2016)**

Bethel Baptist Church, Barry | Bradfield & Rougham Baptist Church, Bury St Edmunds | Christ Church, Longbridge | Clementswood Baptist Church | House of Mercy Christian Fellowship | Parr Street Church, Kendal | Grace Community Church Tipton, W Midlands | Woodlands Church Oakwood, Derby | Bethany Evangelical Church, Dumfries | Newquay URC | Sedbury EC | New Life Church, Whitehaven, Cumbria | Wooler Evangelical Church | Kingfisher Church | Aspley Evangelical Church, Nottingham | High Road Baptist Church, London N12 | Braintree Evangelical Church | Redeemer Church, Manchester | Calvary Baptist Church, Spalding | Living Hope Christian Church, Hull | The Gate Church, Birmingham | The Globe Church | Tyneside Church Central, Gateshead | Bridlington Christian Fellowship | Cardea Community Church | ChristChurch Tilehurst | Christ Church Trumpington | Cowley Church Community | Glenburn Baptist Church | Grace Church Haywards Heath | Greenview Church Glasgow | Lifespring Romanian Fellowship, Stanmore | Stoke Gabriel Baptist Church | Emmanuel Church Marlborough | Potton Baptist Church | Trinity Baptist Church, Gloucester | Coton Green Church | Newtown Evangelical Church | Hill City Church | Baglan Community Church | Beccles Baptist Church | Bethany Christian Church Ulverston | Cambridge Bethel Pentecostal Church | Cauldwell Hall Rd Baptist Church, Ipswich | Cuckfield Baptist Church | Emmanuel Epsom | Hope City Church, Edinburgh | Libanus Baptist Church, N Wales | Refuge Church, Glasgow | Speke Baptist

Church | Wheelock Heath Baptist Church | Community Church Sheppey | Hollywood Christian Life Centre | Park Langley Church | Silver Street Community Church | West Side Fellowship