



THE EQUALITY BILL AND THE FELLOWSHIP OF INDEPENDENT EVANGELICAL CHURCHES

We make this statement on behalf of The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (FIEC), of which our church is a member. The FIEC is a well-respected association of 500 churches, founded in 1922 for the support and encouragement of independent evangelical churches throughout the UK.

The first object in its Constitution is “to advance the evangelical Christian Faith which shall mean the Faith based upon the doctrinal basis of the Fellowship.”

In order to achieve this object, the Constitution, unsurprisingly in an organisation of this size, goes on to allow it “to employ and pay such officers, servants and professional and other advisers as the Fellowship may think fit.”

These two clauses have existed without controversy or difficulty for 88 years. However, this happy ship is about to be blown out of the water by the Equality Bill, currently on its way through Parliament.

Under the provisions of the Bill, the FIEC will be lawfully able to appoint paid staff, but not to require those staff to be in personal agreement or sympathy with its core aims, beliefs and values, unless the posts involved meet the new more narrowly-drawn exemption criteria.

In this Bill, the government has failed to take account of the nature of organisations based on religious values. What goes on within the life of a religious charity is bound up with purposes driven by conviction; a working together of people based on a sincerely-held and entirely legitimate shared ethos; and a structure of relationships based on a trust and assumption that everyone within the organisation shares those core values personally. A religious charity’s work amounts to hugely more than the day-by-day delivery of a schedule of clinically-provided services.

If the FIEC appointed staff whose personal beliefs and circumstances were opposite to the core Bible values which the Fellowship exists to promote, its integrity, in the eyes of its supporters and beneficiaries, would vanish at a stroke. Member churches would be shocked and offended, judging that the FIEC had not only been unfaithful to its Bible beliefs, which all its member churches share, but also that it had taken leave of its senses. The churches would see any such step as an abandonment of long-held values and would sever their connections with the organisation, leaving it financially unviable, even if by then there was still a meaningful reason for its continued existence.

Although this statement is particularly a plea on behalf of The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches, we are aware that the Equality Bill will put at similar risk the present work of many of the 29,000 values-based registered charities in the religious charity sector in England and Wales. The severe employment restrictions imposed by the Bill will greatly diminish the quantity and quality of the work they can undertake, as well as cause a loss of employment opportunity to thousands of individuals no longer able to seek their livelihoods, and use their talents, in this sector.

We therefore urge the House of Lords, when it votes on the Bill on 25 January 2010, to support Baroness O’Cathain’s amendments relating to Schedule 9, thus enabling the FIEC and other similar organisations to continue their effective and constructive work, which lies at the heart of our national life.

The government-supported amendment (99A) falls far short of achieving this, and would still leave organisations which depend upon ethical integrity and consistency in an alienated and paralysed state.

22 January 2010

Signed by the following representatives of member churches:

Abbeyfield Community Church, Colchester	Steve Razzell	Secretary
Above Bar Evangelical Church, Southampton	John Risbridger	Pastor
Airport Church, Newcastle upon Tyne	Mark Sharman	Pastor
Alverstoke Evangelical Church, Gosport	Colin Dyer	Pastor
Amyand Park Chapel, Twickenham	Gerard Hemmings	Pastor
Arnold Road Evangelical Church, Nottingham	Nathan Pomeroy	Pastor
Artillery Street Evangelical Church, Colchester	Malcolm Lane	Elder
Atworth Independent Church, Wiltshire	John Schofield	Pastor
Aycliffe Evangelical Church	John Rubens	Pastor
Bankhall Mission Church, Bootle, Liverpool	Paul Kinnaid	Minister
Banstead Community Church	Dan Green	Pastor
Barnoldswick Gospel Mission	Chris Waddington	Elder
Barton Evangelical Church, Barton on Humber	Gareth James	Pastor
Beacon Evangelical Church, Birmingham	Tim Turner	Pastor & Trustee
Belhus Park Chapel, South Ockenden	Alan S Hobbs	Secretary
Beresford Road Evangelical Church, Lowestoft	Stephen Whitaker	Pastor
Bethel Evangelical Church, Otley, N Yorks	Martin Woodier	Pastor
Bethel Evangelical Church, Ripon	Ron Collard	Elder
Bethel Evangelical Free Church, Havant	John Goodspeed	Church Secretary
Bethel Evangelical Free Church, Wigston	Philip Raine	Minister
Bethel Free Church, Warrington	Terry Martin	Pastor
Bethesda Baptist Church, Felixstowe	Richard Adams	Elder
Bethesda Evangelical Church, Hay-on-Wye	Chris Playford	Honorary Secretary
Beulah Evangelical Church, Seaview, IoW	Steve Bell	Pastor
Binscombe Church, Godalming, Surrey	Peter Hitchcock	Pastor
Bishopstoke Evangelical Church, Eastleigh, Hampshire	Paul Hatchard	Pastor
Boundary Road Evangelical Church, Walthamstow	Maurice Titmarsh	Pastor
Bournville Evangelical Church, Birmingham	Chris Thomas	Pastor
Bradley Road Evangelical Baptist Church, Wrexham	Andrew Graham	Pastor
Bradley Stoke Evangelical Church, Bristol	Tim Sunderland	Pastor
Bristol Road Baptist Church, Weston super Mare	Tim Ford	Pastor
Brixworth Christian Fellowship, Northants	Philip Walter	Minister
Broadstone Baptist Church, Dorset	Tim Gamston	Pastor
Brookdale Evangelical Church	Jonathan Smith	Pastor
Broxteth Baptist Church, Liverpool	Edward Frost	Pastor
Buckingham Evangelical Church	Ken Houghten	Pastor
Burnopfield Gospel Fellowship, County Durham	Eddie Stringer	Secretary
Butts Church, Alton	Clive Anderson	Minister
Calvary Evangelical Church, Brighton	Philip Wells	Pastor
Carey Baptist Church, Reading	David Magowan	Pastor
Carley Evangelical Baptist Church, Leicester	Steve Hardy	Honorary Secretary
Cave Browne Evangelical Church, Wigan	Michael Cornall	Pastor
Chessington Evangelical Church	David Moss	Church Manager
Chilworth Free Church, Guildford	Peter Fenne	Minister
Chorlton Evangelical Church, Manchester	Paul Maylor	Church Secretary
ChristChurch, Harpenden	Gareth Lewis	Senior Minister
Christ Church, Liverpool	Andrew Evans	Minister
Christ Church, Peckham, London	Andrew House	Church Secretary
Christchurch, Baldock	Christopher Jenkins	Minister
City Evangelical Church, Birmingham	Neil Powell	Pastor
City Evangelical Church, Leeds	Mike Wildsmith	Pastor
Clarkston Baptist Church, Glasgow	Mary Bassett	Church Correspondent
Clink Evangelical Church, Frome, Somerset	Jim Short	Elder
Coalville Evangelical Church, Leicester	Ian Hutchings	Elder

Coldharbour Evangelical Free Church, London SE9	Phil Endersby	Elder
Coley Park Baptist Church, Reading	Steve Scrivener	Minister
Corfe Mullen Family Church, Dorset	Martin Walker	Pastor
Cornerstone Evangelical Church, Abergavenny	Huw Medicott	Elder
Cornerstone Evangelical Church, Nottingham	Rev Peter Lewis	Senior Pastor
Cradley Baptist Church, Halesowen	Phil Harding	Pastor
Cranford Baptist Church, Hounslow	Robin Asgher	Pastor
Crestwood Church, Kingswinford, W Midlands	Nigel Rowe	Pastoral Elder
Crockenhill Baptist Church, Swanley	Laurie Everest	Church Secretary
Dawlish Baptist Church, Devon	Stephen Ford	Pastor
Duffield Evangelical Baptist Church, Derbyshire	Keith Powney	Church Secretary
Dunamanagh Baptist Church, Strabane NI	David Canning	Elder
East Beach Evangelical Church, Selsey	Bob Rule	Pastor
East Finchley Baptist Church, London N2	Simon Dyke	Pastor
East Leake Evangelical Church, Loughborough	Roger Hitchings	Pastor
East London Tabernacle Baptist Church	Peter Smith	Elder
Eastbourne Evangelical Free Church	Douglas Daniels	Deacon
Eastney Evangelical Free Church, Southsea	Jonathan Hacker	Pastor
Ebenezer Baptist Church, Chester	Richard Inns	Pastor
Ebenezer Baptist Church, Mold	Elen Probert	Secretary
Ebenezer Baptist Church, West Lavington	Guy Davies	Pastor
Ebenezer Church, Talbot Green	Philip Lewis	Pastor
Ebenezer Evangelical Baptist Church, Machen	Tony Flanders	Pastor
Emmanuel Baptist Church, Cardiff	John Woolley	Pastor
Emmanuel Baptist Church, Sidmouth	Chris Wilson	Secretary
Emmanuel Church, Leamington Spa	Bryan R Jarvis	Elder
Emmanuel Church, Northwich	Alistair Simms	Church Minister
Emmanuel Evangelical Church, Chippenham	Spencer Shaw	Pastor
Emmanuel Evangelical Church, Stoke-on-Trent	Alan Steele	Pastor
Enfield Evangelical Free Church	Nathan Howard	Assistant Pastor
Erskine Church, Kilwinning, Ayrshire	James Strachan	Pastor/Elder
Evangelical Baptist Church, Hatfield	Murray Gifkins	Pastor
Eyemouth Free Baptist Church	Stephen Bender	Pastor
Faversham Gospel Mission Church, Kent	Geoff Wicker	Associate Leader
Feltham Evangelical Church	Philip Venables	Pastor
Fetcham Community Church, Surrey	Ian Fry	Minister
Fittleworth Evangelical Free Church	Gerry Ford	Elder
Flitwick Baptist Church	Michael Teutsch	Pastor
Freemantle Evangelical Church, Southampton	Richard Perry	Elder & Treasurer
Freshbrook Evangelical Church, Swindon	Alan Bailey	Church elder
Gateshead Evangelical Church	Philip S Jackson	Secretary/Elder
Glencroft Church, Glen Parva, Leicester	Jason Duffin	Pastor & Elder
Goldings Church, Loughton, Essex	Jeremy Sandy	Pastor
Grace Baptist Church, Hitchin, Herts	D R Twaits	Elder & Church Secretary
Grace Church, Halewood	Peter Gray	Elder & Church Secretary
Grace Church, Stirchley-Cotteridge, Birmingham	Andy Weatherley	Minister
Grace Community Church, Morval, Looe	Janet Barker	Church Secretary
Grace Fellowship, Ashford, Kent	Andrew Taylor	Elder
Grange Baptist Church, Letchworth	Mark Sewall	Pastor
Grange Free Church, Rayleigh	John Pease	Pastor
Great Hollands Free Church, Bracknell	Chris Smith	Elder
Greenstead Evangelical Free Church. Colchester	Martin Peirce	Pastor
Grove Hill Evangelical Church, South Woodford E18	Martin Hull	Pastor
Guisborough Evangelical Church	Stephen Norval	Secretary & Elder
Gunnersbury Baptist Church	Jonathan Milne	Secretary & Trustee
Hadleigh Baptist Church	Greg Frost	Pastor

Hamilton Road Evangelical Church, Whitstable	Richard Barrett	Church Secretary
Harbourside Evangelical Church, Bridlington	Roland Zschorn	Secretary
Harold Hill Evangelical Free Church, Romford	Keith Plant	Pastor
Hartshill Bible Church, Stoke-on-Trent	Phil Roberts	Pastor
Harvest Community Church, Dorking	Nelson Porter	Pastor
Headley Park Church, Bristol	Peter M Mawson	Pastor
Henfield Evangelical Church, W Sussex	Rob Harris	Minister
Herne Bay Evangelical Free Church	Keith Hoare	Minister
Highfields Church, Cardiff	Peter Baker	Senior Minister
Highgate Road Chapel, London NW5	Andrew Hill	Pastor
Hightown Baptist Church	Graham Nash	Pastor
Holbrook Church, Horsham	Peter Leyshon-Jones	Pastor
Holbrooks Evangelical Church, Coventry	Ben Holmes	Pastor
Holmgate Evangelical Church, Chesterfield	Matthew Hill	Church Secretary
Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre, London SE23	Alan L Barrow	Elder
Hook Evangelical Church, Surbiton	Paul Pease	Pastor
Hope Church, Goldington, Bedford	Martyn Hallett	Pastor
Hope Church, Gravesend	Stephen Lloyd	Pastor
Horsley Evangelical Church,	Ken McIntosh	Pastor
Hounslow Evangelical Church	Andrew Heron	Elder
Hounslow West Evangelical Church	Ronald L Hollands	Minister
Howeth Road Evangelical Church, Bournemouth	Tim Shenton	Pastor
Hull Orchard Park Evangelical Church	Peter Moss	Minister
Hurstpierpoint Evangelical Church	Chris Bulled	Pastor
Ivybridge Evangelical Baptist Church, Devon	Ian MacGregor	Pastor
Junction Road Evangelical Church, Birmingham	Jeff Warner	Pastor
Kennet Valley Free Church, Reading	Richard Fairbairn	Assistant Pastor
Kensal Evangelical Church, London W10	Victor Amofo-Asante	Elder
Kensington Baptist Church, Bristol	Andrew Paterson	Senior Pastor
Kenton Evangelical Church, Letchworth	Mike Hutton	Pastor
Kidderminster Evangelical Church	Philip Hearn	Pastor
Kings Lynn Evangelical Church	Fred Seaman	Church Secretary
Kingshurst Evangelical Church, Birmingham	Steve Collins	Elder & Trustee
Kirriemuir Free Baptist Church	David Martin	Pastor
Knighton Evangelical Free Church, Leicester	Andy Upton	Pastor
Koinonia Independent Evangelical Church, Andover	Don Olden	Pastor
Laburnum Road Community Church, Leicester	Paul Mason	Pastor
Lancing Tabernacle	John Woods	Pastor
Langford Evangelical Church, Somerset	George Beacham	Pastor
Lansdowne Baptist Church, Bournemouth	Bob Cooper	Church Manager
Lavendon Baptist Church	Ian Rees	Pastor
Lawshall Evangelical Free Church	Paul Mitchell	Secretary / Deacon
Leominster Baptist Church	Derek Simpson	Pastor
Letchworth Baptist Church, Herts	Derek Moore-Crispin	Senior Pastor
Lighthouse Baptist Church, Bow, London E3	Erik Pattison	Minister
Litchard Mission Church, Bridgend	Oswald Penry	Senior Elder
Long Crendon Baptist Church	J P Steadman	Senior Pastor
Longhorsley Mission, Morpeth	Alan R Pagan	Trustee & Treasurer
Longmeadow Evangelical Church, Stevenage	John Cooper	Elder / Church secretary
Lonlas Gospel Mission, Neath	Paul Kosciecha	Pastor
Lostock Christian Fellowship, Stockport	David Theobald	Church Secretary
Louth Evangelical Church, Lincs	Chris Sharp	Elder
Lower Kingswood Evangelical Church, Surrey	Jim Murkett	Assistant Pastor

Magdalen Road Evangelical Church, Oxford	Peter Comont	Pastor
Malvern Evangelical Church	Stephen Atkins	Elder
Manor Park Evangelical Church, Worcester	Steve Mitchell	Elder
Market Overton Free Church, Rutland	Roy Palframan	Elder
Marston Neighbourhood Church, Oxford	David Earl	Pastor
Matthew Henry Evangelical Church, Chester	Ron Glenn	Elder
Maybridge Community Church, Worthing	Andy Hickford	Senior Minister
Meare Evangelical Chapel	David Sheard	Pastor
Medway Christian Fellowship	Colin Weaver	Elder
Mickfield Evangelical Church, Stowmarket	Mark Howson	Pastor
Milland Evangelical Church, Liphook	Gareth Jones	Pastor
Millbridge Evangelical Church, Minehead	Audrey Williams	Church Administrator
Minster Christian Centre, Cardiff	Colin Towler	Elder
Moordown Baptist Church, Bournemouth	Gary Benfold	Pastor
Moorside Church, Bradford	Paul Hinton	Pastor
Mundesley Free Church, Norfolk	John Leaf	Pastor
Nebo Baptist Church, Cefn Cribwr	Richard Roberts	Pastor
Needham Market Evangelical Church	Peter Kinley	Minister
New Malden Evangelical Free Church	Bob Mullins	Elder
New Milton Evangelical Free Church	Patrick Hawes	Secretary
Oadby Evangelical Free Church	Stuart Glover	Elder
Oakwood Chapel, Harlow	Martin Biddiscombe	Elder
Oldham Bethel Church	David Skinner	Pastor
Olivet Baptist Church, Deptford, London	Geoffrey Rumble	Pastor
Otford Evangelical Free Church, Kent	Rodney Lissenden	Deacon/Secretary
Parbold Evangelical Church	Stan Thompson	Elder, Secretary & Trustee
Park Hill Evangelical Church, Brighton	Derek Fortnam	Pastor
Parkstone Evangelical Free Church, Poole	Geoffrey D Lock	Pastoral elder
Paulsgrove Baptist Church, Portsmouth	Roy A Dumphreys	Presiding Elder
Pelsall Evangelical Church, Walsall	Robert Couchman	Elder & Church Secretary
Penknap Providence Church	Guy Davies	Pastor
People's Hall Evangelical Church, Bridgnorth	Jackie Brown	Pastor
Plains Evangelical Church, Airdrie	Alan McKnight	Pastor
Playing Place Christian Fellowship, Truro	William L E Searle	Treasurer
Plumbland Evangelical Chapel, Cumbria	Chris Brook	Elder
Pontrhydyrun Baptist Church, Cwmbran	John Edmonds	Minister
Pound Lane Free Church, Isleham, Cambs	David John Hall	Pastor
Pound Lane Mission Church, Basildon, Essex	Trevor Argent	Pastor & Correspondent
Priors Park Chapel, Tewkesbury	Nick Watkins	Pastor
Providence Baptist Church, Clifton	Nick Rogers	Deacon & Secretary
Putney Evangelical Church	Dave Kelland	Pastor
Ravensden Baptist Church, Bedfordshire	Bernard Hicks	Church Secretary
Reynard Way Evangelical Church, Northampton	Paul Milner	Pastor
Rickstones Evangelical Church, Witham, Essex	Adrian Diaper	Minister
Ridgeway Church, St Albans	Simon Ogbourn	Pastor
Rochester Baptist Church, Kent	Wesley Aiken	Pastor
Rock Baptist Church, Cambridge	Matthew Evans	Pastor
Rock of Ages Evangelical Church, Doncaster	Frank E Holmes	Pastor
Rockwood Mission, Wrexham	Stephen Dunning	Pastor
Romford Evangelical Free Church	Andrew Bryant	Pastor
Royston Evangelical Church	Frank Pearson	Elder
Rudgwick Chapel, Horsham, West Sussex	Charles Sanders	Member of Church Leadership Team
Ryedale Evangelical Church, Pickering	William Horsburgh	Pastor
Sale Evangelical Church	Colin Baldwin	Deacon
Sawbridgeworth Evangelical Congregational	Gary Hanson	Minister

Church, Herts		
Scott Drive Church, Exmouth	Lee N Emerson	Pastor
Selhurst Evangelical Church	K King	Secretary
Send Evangelical Church, Woking	Chris Webb	Pastor
Shoebury Evangelical Church, Southend	Bob Werrett	Minister
Soham Baptist Church	Colin Stringer	Pastor
Sompting Community Church, W Sussex	Colin Frampton	Minister
South Park Evangelical Church, Norwich	Stuart Bailey	Pastor
Southern Cross Evangelical Church, Brighton	Stephen Packham	Pastor
Spicer Street Church, St Albans	Greg Strain	Senior Pastor
St Leonards Congregational Church	Adrian Lee	Pastor
Stanley Park Church, Liverpool	Trevor Laws	Secretary & Treasurer
Stanmore Chapel	J Colin Leyshon	Minister
Stapleford Baptist Church, Nottingham	Andrew Dawson	Elder
Stranger's Rest Mission Evangelical Church, Wapping	Borbon Manalang	Youth worker
Summerstown Mission Evangelical Church, Tooting SW17	Peter Bines	Pastor
Swindon Evangelical Church	Paul Williams	Pastor
Thatcham Community Church	Hedley Clemo	Pastor
Thatcham Free Church	Keith Densham	Secretary
The Grange Free Church, Shrewsbury	Roy Whittall	Pastor
The Kings Church, Addlestone	Keith Bland	Elder
The Ragged School Evangelical Church, Chesterfield	David Botham	Secretary
The Slade Evangelical Church, Plumstead, London	Wesley McNabb	Pastor
The Straits Church, Dudley, W Midlands	Maurice Powell	Pastor
Thornton Heath Evangelical Church, Surrey	Barrie Llewellyn	Church secretary
Three Bridges Free Church, Crawley	Jon Morgan	Deacon & Church Secretary
Tobermory Evangelical Church, Isle of Mull	Dr E Morgan	Elder
Tollgate Evangelical Church	Ian Cooper	Pastor
Trinity Evangelical Church, Rainhill	Jim Mollitt	Pastor
Trinity Free Church, Manningtree	Gaius Phillingham	Pastor
Trinity Road Chapel	Paul Ebling	Senior Deacon, Fabric Warder & Organist
Truro Evangelical Church	Peter Ninnis	Minister
Tyndale Baptist Church, Yate & Chipping Sodbury	Bert Weenink	Pastor
Walthamstow Central Baptist Church	Roger Neil	Pastor
Walton Evangelical Church, Chesterfield	Simon Robinson	Pastor
Waterloo Road Church, Uxbridge	Peter Lillystone	Pastor
Wayfarers Fellowship Evangelical Church	Terry Blunden	Secretary
Welbeck Road Evangelical Church, Byker, Newcastle upon Tyne	David Lovelock	Pastor
Wellington Chapel, Herefordshire	Peter Seccombe	
West Ewell Evangelical Church, Epsom, Surrey	Robin Calcutt	Pastor
West Shore Baptist Church, Llandudno	Dale Brown	Pastor
West Street Baptist Church and Christian Centre, Dunstable	Mark Lawrence	Senior Pastor
West Worthing Evangelical Church	Ian McNaughton	Pastor
Westover Free Church, Broadstairs	Andrew Coats	Pastor
Whiteshill Evangelical Church, Bristol	Martin Moore	Minister
Widcombe Baptist Church, Bath	Rupert Bentley-Taylor	Pastor
Wolverton Evangelical Church, Milton Keynes	Allan Huxtable	Pastor
Woodford Evangelical Church, Essex	Paul Doye	Elder
Woodgreen Evangelical Church, Worcester	Peter Barham	Associate pastor
Woolwich Evangelical Church, London SE18	Oliver Baker	Pastor

Wootton Baptist Church, Bedford
Worthing Tabernacle
Wyche Free Church, Malvern
Yelling Baptist Chapel, Cambridgeshire

Robert T Stanton	Secretary/Deacon
Mark Weeden	Pastor
Peter A Goodbury	Elder
Geoff Barnard	Secretary