

PRESS RELEASE – 4 DECEMBER 2009



FIEC FOR A NEW DAY!

The FIEC has appointed John Stevens, a Birmingham pastor and former law lecturer, to serve as its first-ever director from September 2010.

Educated at Cambridge University, where he became a Christian in his final year, John was a law lecturer for 16 years until 2007, combining this role with his responsibilities as one of the three pastors of City Evangelical Church, Birmingham, which he helped to found in 1999. The church now has a regular congregation of 300. John, who is 41, is married to Ursula and they have four young children.

Alongside his other ministries, John is co-chairman of the *A Passion for Life* steering group, a member of the Midlands Gospel Partnership steering committee and runs the Midlands Ministry Training Course.

John's appointment, which was confirmed by a special FIEC Assembly in November, will involve him in leading the FIEC in the fulfilment of its core aim of supporting independent evangelical churches, alongside the development of its training and outreach ministries.

In his work as FIEC Director, John will be supported by others, including the current General Secretary, Richard Underwood, who will be developing his ministry in support of churches and pastors.

Welcoming the Assembly's confirmation of John's appointment, FIEC president Rupert Bentley-Taylor commented: *"John displays a profound understanding of the days in which we live and of the challenges and opportunities that lie before our churches. He has an inspiring and strategic vision of what, under God, can be done to move the gospel forward in our land. He also has a deep theological understanding, a love for God's word and confidence in preaching God's truth both to strengthen the churches and to reach the outsider."*

In parallel with the appointment of a director, the FIEC has approved a number of changes to its governance structure, replacing its 35-member Council with an 11-member Trust Board.

In place of its Annual Assembly, it has also launched a Leaders' Conference – next year to be held at Swanwick from 20-22 October 2010.

The changes adopted represent the most significant governance changes in the FIEC's 87-year history. The existing structure had been in place, with only fairly minor variations, since 1931. The more streamlined governance approach, coupled with a strengthening of the practical ownership of the FIEC by its 500 affiliated churches, is aimed at enabling the Fellowship to be more effective and responsive to the opportunities and challenges of evangelical church life in a godless and increasingly hostile society.

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Note to Editors:

The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches, formed in 1922, supports over 500 affiliated churches through the provision of advice, training and outreach resources.