

## FIEC Leaders' Conference 2022 Seminar – Why Independency?

Acts 6:1-7 – the importance of church order to church growth

### 1. *History*

- Elizabethan Puritans and the Church of England
- the emergence of separatism
- Richard Fitz's congregation: liturgical unhappiness
- Robert Browne: Christ, not the monarch, the head of the church
- the 'keys of the kingdom', Matt. 16:19
- Henry Jacob's congregationalist church in Southwark, founded 1616
- emergence of Calvinistic Baptist churches
- associations of Baptist churches

### 2. *Biblical principles*

The church belongs to Christ, Matt. 16:18; we are to observe all that he commanded, Matt. 28:20

i) Christ gives authority to the church, i.e. the congregation (Matt. 16:18-19; 18:15-20) – elders are to lead (Heb. 13:7, 17), oversee (Acts 20:28), pastor (1 Pet. 5:2), teach (1 Tim. 3:2); the congregation appoints officers (Acts 1:23-26; 6:5; 14:23), sends out preachers & missionaries (Acts 13:1-3), is involved in church discipline (Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5:1-5; 2 Cor. 2:5-11) and in upholding right doctrine (Acts 15; Gal. 1:2, 6-9).

ii) a regenerate church membership (Acts 8:12; 1 Cor. 1:2)

iii) separation from the State (Acts 4:19; Rom. 13:1-7; Acts 20:28; 1 Tim. 5:17)

iv) association, not isolation (Gal. 1:2; Col. 4:16; Acts 15; 2 Cor. 8:1-7, 19)

### 3. *Present challenges*

- pragmatism
- abuse
- withdrawal
- fragmentation

### *Further reading:*

David Skull et al., *Pure Church: Recovering God's Plan for Local Churches* (Grace Publications)

Mark Dever, *The Church: The Gospel Made Visible* (B&H/9Marks)

Mark Dever & Jonathan Leeman, eds., *Baptist Foundations: Church Government for an Anti-Institutional Age* (B&H)

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