
1996 FIEC Council Statement on Ecumenism

(Now withdrawn)

All gospel-loving Christians face many kinds of tension, but there is one particular way in which we are increasingly pressurised at the present time. Since the formation of the Churches Together movement in 1991, with its avowed aim to pursue ecumenism at the local level, we are constantly being urged to join other churches in united services, prayer meetings, marches and evangelistic activities.

If all the other local churches and their leaders involved in a united activity are wholly committed to the one true gospel there is no problem. Indeed the FIEC desires to encourage that kind of true and biblical ecumenism. Often, however, some of the churches and leaders with whom we are urged to unite neither believe nor preach those essential gospel truths which are embodied in our FIEC Doctrinal Basis or a similar Statement of Faith. Some do not accept the inerrancy of Scripture, the eternal punishment of the unsaved, or that Christ died bearing the punishment due to sinners. Some deny the deity of Christ, his virgin birth, miracles and literal resurrection. Others teach that religious ceremonies such as baptism, the mass and the adoration of Mary have some saving efficacy.

The FIEC has always felt it to be confusing and unbiblical to unite in public acts of worship and outreach with those who question and deny the faith. Our Doctrinal Basis, *What We Believe*, clearly states, "True fellowship between churches exists only where they are faithful to the gospel."

If an evangelical church or leader unites with those of a liberal persuasion who deny essential gospel truths, or with those of a Roman Catholic persuasion who add to the gospel, then great confusion is created. The impression is given either that the evangelical, liberal and Roman Catholic are all agreed when in fact they are worlds apart

doctrinally, or that their different messages are equally valid when in fact there is only one gospel. Not only is this confusing but it is also a contradiction of the gospel on which our FIEC churches unite.

The gospel of salvation by grace is so precious to us that we desire to stand together with all who believe and preach it. For the same reason, we are compelled to remain separate from those who deny it. By taking this position we are seeking to follow the commands of Scripture.

(Galatians 1:8, Romans 16:17).

(Agreed unanimously in Assembly April 1996)

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[E.J. Poole Connor](#), 'Evangelicals who remain in complacent fellowship with those who deny their faith are not only failing to stem the tide of apostasy; they are accelerating the pace. Their very leniency is eloquent advocacy; it cries aloud to multitudes that what men call liberalism in religion is far from being the harmful thing that Spurgeon thought it, for are not they - outstanding evangelicals - hand-in-glove with those who teach it?.'

[A critique of the new Statement that replaces this one](#)
[More background on serious problems with FIEC, Affinity and WEST](#)
[here.](#)

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