

INTRODUCTION

# Mülheimer Association

of  
Evangelical  
Free  
Churches

(The MV)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### *FOREWORD*

#### *The MV- an Evangelical Free Church in Germany*

##### *a. What Church Means for Us*

An Evangelical Free Church  
The organisational structure  
Baptism and Communion  
Membership in practice

##### *b. Values and goals*

A living faith  
Biblical theology  
Credible evangelisation and mission  
Christian fellowship  
Comprehensive pastoral care  
Cooperation with the Body of Christ  
Social responsibility

##### *c. Theological position*

Teaching about Jesus Christ  
Teaching on salvation  
Teaching on the Holy Spirit  
Teaching on the end times

##### *d. How the mv works*

##### *e. Interdenominational contacts*

##### *f. The history of the mv*

##### *g. Appendix*

## FOREWORD

Why do we as an association need to formulate how we see ourselves?

We see two reasons for this:

### *1. What we project to the outside world*

There are many different answers given today in our country to the question of what church and the Church of Jesus Christ actually means. The answers vary from church to church. The differences affect the teaching and practice of those churches. In Germany there is the difference between the evangelical and catholic church, but also many different free churches and different new independent churches and churches targetting other nationalities.

Consequently it is vital to explain to an outsider what the MV believes and practises.

This description of ourselves is not intended to isolate ourselves from other churches and fellowships, but is more of a policy statement to clarify our own position.

We know that other doctrines and practices are possible and that these are blessed by Christ as the Lord of the Church and we recognise that our understanding is only partial.(1 Cor. 13:12)

### *2. How we work within the church*

The church of Jesus lives in every age with Jesus's commission:,, Go into all the world and make disciples of all nations.,,

The 2000 year old history of the church of Jesus shows that there is always the danger of the church losing sight of this commission because she is too preoccupied with self.

Moreover faced with the many different work opportunities in the area there is the danger of being involved in everything, but thereby effectively being able to achieve nothing.

Therefore it is necessary to be aware of one's own specific task and to think about the means and strategies required to fulfil this mission.

This model and explanation should serve to give direction to all the churches in the MV.

The Association leadership

## **THE MV-AN EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH IN GERMANY**

The Mülheimer Association is an evangelical free church in Germany based on an evangelical-charismatic spirituality or theology.

It offers independent local churches a spiritual and working fellowship with the goal of supporting these churches to honour God through continual growth in the values and goals set out in the Bible.

The churches in the MV strive for

- living faith through Word and Spirit
- biblical theology
- credible evangelism
- committed Christian fellowship
- comprehensive pastoral care
- goal-oriented church strategy.

Moreover they aim to contribute to:

- the evangelisation of Germany - also through newly planted churches
- the unity of the Church of Jesus Christ in our country through local cooperation which is characterized by respect and love
- world mission- multiplied also by sending out workers.

The churches in the MV are convinced that reaching these goals can only be made possible through growth in understanding of God the Father, the love of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.

## A. WHAT CHURCH MEANS FOR US

### 1. AN EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

The church of Jesus Christ is based on the incarnation, the substitutionary death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the sending of the Holy Spirit. Since the ascension of Jesus the church waits to be complete when the Lord comes again.

The church of Jesus is alive where the Holy Spirit calls people through God's word to follow Jesus and to be together with other Christians in the fellowship of believers. The benchmark for the thinking and life of this fellowship is the Bible.

Jesus' s offer of salvation is received through baptism and communion. Through communal prayer the church honours God and asks for His intervention.

All the church members see themselves as members of the Body of Christ and consequently as co-workers who can contribute their gifts to the building of God's kingdom.

The church leadership works through the appointed church leaders' group (the eldership.)

The ordained pastor or church leader serves in this leadership group as a *primus inter pares* the first among equals.

The goal of the church is working together towards building God's kingdom to the glory of God.

The MV sees itself as part of the worldwide church of Jesus and is classified here as an evangelical-charismatic Free church within the protestant tradition.

### 2. THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Most of the churches, but also individual areas with more churches within the MV are legally registered associations. Thus they act independently of each other in their rules, practice and decisions. The local church has the definitive authority for the spiritual life of its fellowship. The financing of the church workers and the church life occurs through voluntary giving from the church members.

### 3. BAPTISM AND COMMUNION

#### *a. Believer's baptism*

In the MV churches only those people are baptised who recognise Jesus as Saviour and Lord through His crucifixion and resurrection.

Baptism is based on the death and resurrection of Jesus; through it the believer clearly identifies his own death and resurrection with Christ.

Since by law young people are considered able to make a decision about religion from the age of 14 we recommend baptism from this age onwards. Baptism is generally conducted in the context of a celebratory service with total immersion. Baptism cannot be repeated.

<sup>1</sup> The classification of local churches into regional associations in the MV is stipulated in the Association Articles.

<sup>2</sup> The churches in the MV respect the decision of a believer to stand by his own infant baptism as a matter of conscience before God and man.

#### *b Communion*

The MV understanding of communion is that it is a time when we remember, share fellowship, confess and express our hope. We believe that Christ blesses the celebration of communion as Lord of the church of believers through the work of the Holy Spirit.

The communion is open to all those who attend church who recognise Jesus as their Lord and are prepared to live their lives according to biblical principles.

cf. Matthew 26:26 ; Luke 22:19 ; 1 Corinthians 10: 16; 11:23.

#### 4. HOW MEMBERSHIP WORKS

##### *a. Requirements for membership in MV churches:*

- trusting Jesus personally as Lord and Saviour( being born again cf. John 3:3).
- baptism
- willingness to live a bible-based life

##### *b. Membership is an expression of a personal wish and is voluntary.*

Some churches offer new members a seminar where the theology and practice of the MV is explained.

##### *c. Marks of membership*

The church member

- participates in the life of the church to meet his and the church's requirements
- is prepared to support the church financially
- makes an effort to act righteously in all areas of life
- respects other churches and fellowships
- shares the responsibility of the church for society.

We are convinced that as we understand the New Testament definition of church, membership can only be practical in conjunction with a local church. Dual membership is only conceivable in exceptional cases(e.g. a job which requires membership of a particular denomination.)

## B. VALUES AND GOALS

### 1. A LIVING FAITH

The MV is convinced that the Christian faith is hallmarked by:

Conviction- we recognise the truth of Holy Scripture.

Trust- we experience fellowship with God on the basis of trust and love.

Obedience- we ask God's will for our lives.

The MV pursues the goal of coming alongside people as they become Christians and encouraging them to grow in their faith. We especially emphasise:

- growth in the knowledge of God,, through studying God's word,
- maturity of the personality through the transforming work of the Holy Spirit,
- increased authority through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Thus we follow the commission of Jesus to make people disciples. A disciple is someone who submits his whole life with understanding to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and who follows the command of Jesus to tell the „Good News,, to non-Christians.

Cf. Matthew 28:19; 2 Timothy 2:1-2

### 2. BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

a. The Bible is as the word of God the necessary basis for faith, doctrine and living. In signing the declaration of Lausanne we recognise,, the goldly inspiration, the revelatory truth and authority of the Old and New Testament scriptures in their entirety as the only written word of God. It is without error in everything that it states and is the only infallible benchmark for faith and life. We recognise in the same way the power of God's word to make salvation real. The message of the Bible is addressed to the whole of humanity, because God's revelation in Christ and in Holy Scripture is unchanging. The Holy Spirit still speaks today through this revelation. He illuminates the spirit of His people in every culture. Thus they recognise His truth ever anew with their own eyes. The Holy Spirit reveals to the whole church more and more of the intricate wisdom of God.,, Our own theological work grew out of the joy in this revealed word of God and desires to take the right responsibility for church and society. In teaching and explaining the word of God our aim is to set out the whole contents of Holy Scripture.

We see theological discussion and debate with Christians of other denominations as absolutely vital as our thoughts are only incomplete.

b. The MV accepts the theological fundamentals that are laid out in the three great declarations in Christendom(the Apostolicum, Nicaeno-Constantinopolitanum, Athanasianum) and in the 1970 declaration of the Evangelical Alliance.

c. In its outworking MV theology is in line with reformed insights : only Scripture, only grace, only faith, only Jesus.

Cf. Psalm 19: 8-9; 2 Timothy 3: 14-17

4 The declaration of Lausanne was the closing statement made at the end of the International Conference for Worldwide Evangelism in Lausanne in 1974

5 See appendix

### 3. CREDIBLE EVANGELISM AND MISSION

The MV considers that the church's central role is to share the gospel, the ÑGood News,, with all people.

We start from the assumption that Jesus Christ is

- the only way to God
- the only truth that sets people free
- the only one who can give meaning to life.

The MV is aware of its responsibility to meet Jesus's demands. In doing this we respect the personality of each individual. It is necessary that the church accepts each one with love, makes him or her aware of the truth of Holy Scripture and trusts that the Holy Spirit will do the work of convincing people.

The MV would like also to play its part in making a contribution to world mission. This happens through spiritual and financial support for the churches partnered with the MV as well as the mission organisations we have close relationships with and workers who have been sent out from our own congregations.

Cf. Mark 16:15-18 ; Matthew 28:18

### 4. CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Our aim is to live out the fellowship as set out in the New Testament (Greek *koinonia*., that is fellowship with God and with our fellow men, 1 John 1:3.)

In the light of that we particularly emphasise in our church life together:

#### *a. Obvious, practical church meetings*

The church service is the Ñheart,, of church life and has the goal of gathering the church together, being upbuilding (God ministers to the Church) leading in the worship of God (the church serves God). The church should be welcoming, personal, honest and creative in all its aspects.

To guarantee a necessary amount of trust and close relationships we invite people in our fellowships to regularly participate in house groups or small groups.

The programme is complemented by special programmes which offer teaching and target particular groups (e.g. young people.)

Small groups in the church offer a loving and personal framework for mutual correction and encouragement.

#### *b. Gift-oriented working together*

We recognise the special gifts and callings of every Christian. The church as the body of Christ lives through these different gifts of individual members. Therefore it is our task to recognise the potential in each church member and to see this used to serve the whole. The different working groups in the churches offer good practical opportunities where the individual member can receive teaching, fellowship, encouragement and correction.

Cf. Romans 12:1; 1 Corinthians 12:1

#### *c. Goal-oriented leadership*

The church of Jesus can grow where people are prepared to take responsibility for others and where

this responsibility is lovingly practised.

We expect leaders in our churches to have a high degree of :

- willingness to follow the work that God has already prepared and based on that to formulate goals for their own work
- patience and trustworthiness in holding to the set goals
- ability to fight in the spiritual battle even when there is resistance.

It goes without saying that each leader should have personal credibility, loyalty to the church and her leaders.

Cf. Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 3:10

#### *d. Marriage, the Family and Singles*

Marriage and the family are the smallest elements of our life together and need the special support of the church.

Children are a special gift from God that we want to accept into our fellowships with thankfulness and to lead in their sense of responsibility towards God. The churches endeavour to have a range of programmes on offer that suit the different age groups. If the parents wish, babies can be introduced in the church service to the church and placed under the protection and blessing of God. The churches also see the importance of encouraging singles to participate in church and family life.

Cf. Ephesians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 7:1; Mark 10:13

#### *e. International mix*

We are delighted to have people in our fellowships from different countries as an expression of the great family of God.

### 5. COMPREHENSIVE PASTORAL CARE

The MV is aware of the damage caused to people by sin and personal suffering. We are concerned that members of the churches receive the counselling and social help they need. In this we follow the example and command of Jesus. This involves working through the sins of the past with God's help as well as meeting social needs with practical support.

The pastoral responsibility in our churches is made real through social advice, house visits and pastoral care of the elderly.

Cf. Proverbs 14:31; Matthew 11:5; Galatians 2:10

### 6. WORKING TOGETHER WITH THE BODY OF CHRIST

The churches in the MV recognise with thankfulness God's working through 2000 years of church history and in his worldwide church today.

We particularly appreciate the heritage of the Reformation and early Pietism as well as the Healing and Pentecostal movement and we seek to combine this heritage with the hallmarks of recent evangelical charismatic spirituality. We strive to work together with all those churches where Jesus is recognised as the Lord of the church.

A particular concern is to overcome the conflict between so-called 'evangelical,' and 'charismatic' churches.

The MV sees itself committed to Jesus's command to demonstrate the unity of the Body of Christ in this broken world to the glory of God.

Cf. John 17:20

## 7. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The churches of the MV realise the tasks and the problems of community living and try here to make a constructive contribution through prayer for spiritual and social needs as well as through social action in the framework of church and interdenominational opportunities e.g. for particularly marginalised groups.

We are convinced that the most important contribution the church of Jesus can make to society is to be people filled with the love of God.

Cf. Jeremiah 29:7 ; 1 Timothy 2:1

## C. THEOLOGICAL POSITION

Against the background of the spiritual development of the MV we emphasise in inter-church dialogue some particularly relevant theological points:

### TEACHING ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

We declare the uniqueness and the universality of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ, true man and true God, the only Word of God with God since eternity and master of creation who reveals to mankind through His person, words and deeds the nature and perfect will of God the Father.

He died on the cross of Golgotha in the place of sinners and has been confirmed by God through His resurrection as the only mediator between God and man.

Thus there is only one Saviour, one Gospel, one Name through whom men can be saved.

All people are invited to recognise Him as Saviour and Lord through repentance and faith. Whoever rejects Him is eternally separated from God.

In His Ascension Jesus returned to God the Father. He holds all power in heaven and on earth and will return again one day in power and majesty as Lord and Judge.

With the New Testament we recognise that all mankind can recognise the hand of God in the open revelation in the natural world, but we do not accept that this can save him.

We categorically reject every belief that presupposes that Jesus Christ speaks equally through all religions and ideologies.

Cf. Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:15-23

### TEACHING ON SALVATION

Every decision for Jesus Christ was preceded by the election and calling of mankind through God Himself before the foundation of the world.

He works through His Holy Spirit as people examine themselves in the light of the Word of God to convince them personally of their own lostness, opens their eyes to salvation in Christ and produces the saving faith of rebirth.

The individual receives the Holy Spirit.

The justification of the sinner is the gracious gift of God because of the death on the cross of Jesus and is received by faith. God forgives sin because of Jesus and through a sovereign gracious act restores the broken relationship between Himself and mankind which was caused by mankind's sin.

The relationship between man and God is restored through justification, the believer is saved through Christ and set free from the power of sin and godless powers. He is forgiven by God and invited to build a relationship with Him based on love and trust. He can now consider himself sanctified in Jesus Christ.

Cf. Romans 8:28; Ephesians 1:4; Acts 2:37; Romans 3-5; 6-8; 2 Corinthians 5:14; 1 Corinthians 6:11

### TEACHING ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

#### *a. Basic experiences with the Holy Spirit*

The Holy Spirit makes faith and being a Christian possible. Every Christian receives the Holy Spirit on conversion and is baptised in the Spirit.

His future spiritual growth depends on how much he then opens himself to the deeper work of the Holy Spirit.

Thus the Holy Spirit wants to:

- make the believer able to worship God
- reveal the character of Jesus in the believer
- give authority for service in the church and the world.

To be able to experience this deeper work of the Holy Spirit, believers ask God to fill them with the Holy Spirit.

This prayer is however not a one-off experience, but it needs to be repeated over and over again, especially when the believer has offended the Holy Spirit through disobedience or is working in particularly demanding ministries.

This being filled by the Holy Spirit is received by faith ; it may be indicated in some cases by particular experiences e.g. through the receiving of particular gifts such as speaking in tongues or prophecy.

Cf. Galatians 5:22; Romans 8:5; Ephesians 5:18; Ephesians 4:30; Acts 4:23

### *b. Sanctification*

The sanctification of the sinner is the transformation of the Christian into the image of Jesus Christ and is a gift of God and the responsibility of the individual.

Sanctification is therefore a process of growing in the appropriation of the truths of God's word and this affects the individual's thoughts, words and actions as well as influencing his lifestyle and character. It is evident through obedience to God's word in everyday situations, through the character becoming more like Christ and through the ability to live in fellowship with God.

Sanctification occurs because

- sin has lost its power to enslave because it was crucified with Christ
- the Holy Spirit has taken the initiative, leads the sinner from sin, causes a longing for change and finally makes transformation possible.

The end result is that the Holy Spirit reveals the person of Jesus in the life of the believer.

Obvious changes that occur in a believer's life may in some cases be connected with their working through emotional hurts or being set free from demonic powers.

Sanctification is not merely a personal experience; it is revealed first and foremost in the context of the church which is the "fellowship of the holy,..". On the other hand the spiritual state of the church today has a definite influence on the sanctification process of the believer.

We look forward to complete perfection and freedom from sin in eternity.

Cf. Galatians 5:22

### *c. The gifts of the Holy Spirit*

The MV recognises with thankfulness the multi-faceted gifts of God in His people, whether these are practical gifts or the spiritual gifts listed in the New Testament passages in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12.

All these gifts are still promised to the church of Jesus today and are used in the churches of the MV for the edification of the church and to the glory and praise of Jesus.

As Paul did, we encourage believers to faithfully use the gifts they have received towards building up the church and to strive beyond those for more gifts of grace.

Every work of service in the church has to be in line with the word of God and submitted to the church leadership.

Cf. Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 4:10; 1 Corinthians 12:31; 14:1

To be prepared for the consequences of often controversial spiritual gifts we in the MV live according to the following principles:

### *The gift of prophecy*

For us in the MV a prophetic word is a message from God, given directly to someone by the Holy Spirit. This message can be for those concerned or for others. The contents may be an expression of God's viewpoint on the past, present or future of people or institutions.

We see the gift of prophecy in the context of preaching, counselling or small groups as a helpful word at the right time.

In practice the following is true for prophecy in churches:

- the person giving the prophecy submits to the church leadership
- every prophetic word is tested against God's word.

Cf. Romans 12:3; 1 Corinthians 14

### *The gift of healing the sick*

We profess as the scriptures state that God also wants to be the physician for His people.

Thus we encourage all believers in cases of illness to ask not only for medical help, but also to ask for healing through prayer.

As well as the church elders, people who have this particular gift can participate in this ministry.

We ask God for great authority in our churches through a deeper relationship of love for and trust in Him.

Prayer for physical or emotional healing should be part of a comprehensive care programme for the sick and should include for example confession or prayer for release from demonic powers.

Cf. Exodus 15:26; James 5:14; 1 Corinthians 12:9; 11:30

### *The gift of speaking in tongues*

The gift of speaking in tongues is the God-given ability to worship God in a language that one has not learned before.

We value this gift as a help in deepening the prayer life of the believer and thus building him up personally. It enables deeper worship and gives more sensitivity to the work of the Holy Spirit.

We encourage all believers to ask God for the gift of His Spirit. We maintain that the gift of speaking in tongues is made available by the Holy Spirit, who gives it to people as He wishes.

There is no particular method for receiving this gift.

For churches in the MV, receiving the gift of speaking in tongues is not evidence of spiritual maturity or authority.

We recommend that this gift is used in personal prayer times and only occurs in public services where there is interpretation.

Cf. 1 Corinthians 14

## TEACHING ON THE END TIMES

We believe from the Scriptures that Jesus Christ will return at the end of time for all mankind in power and holiness as the victor over the powers of the evil one and as the final judge.

We long for the day when there will be a new heaven and a new earth where peace, righteousness and wholeness will prevail instead of death, suffering and pain.

The Lord of the church will transform the multitudes of the righteous and holy from all ages and gather them to Himself, so that they can participate in His holiness and power.

Then God will be all in all.

We do not accept the proud, self-confident dream that mankind can ever establish a paradise on earth.

We recognise our human limitations as the church of Jesus in this world whenever we work towards righteousness, peace and being good stewards of creation.

Cf. Matthew 24-25; 1 Corinthians 15; Revelation

## **D. HOW THE MV WORKS**

The MV forms the umbrella organisation for the local churches which are members. The local churches, districts and associations are legally independent, but voluntarily submit themselves to the spiritual leadership of the council of elders or rather the delegates' conference. The legal structure of the limited company is historically limited.

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### **DELEGATES' CONFERENCE**

This is the committee which makes decisions at the highest level in the MV. It deals with questions of fundamental importance, accepts the accounting reports of the council of elders, the managing director and from the various fields of work. It is also the authority responsible for questions on doctrine and church practice within the MV.

### **THE DELEGATE SYSTEM**

The members of the delegates' conference are determined by a delegate system that guarantees that the individual associations, areas and churches are proportionally represented. The members of the council of elders, pastors and association representatives are chosen.

### **MV - A LIMITED COMPANY**

The shareholders are  
the respective representatives of the regional associations( the association elders)  
the chairman  
the managing director

### **THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS**

The council of elders are responsible for seeing that decisions made at the delegates' conference are followed through. This council of elders is accountable to the delegates. Their task is to deal with spiritual and practical questions put by the churches as well as wider or interdenominational matters. Finally they aim to maintain balance in selecting candidates for posts and decide on disciplinary issues.

### **THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS**

The regional associations of the MV send an association representative (an association elder) to the council of elders. The chairman and the managing director also belong to this group.

### **North West Association**

The local churches form the regional North-West Christian Fellowship Registered Association

### **Weser- Ems Association**

The local churches are independent registered associations.

### **Berlin Association**

The local churches are independent registered associations.

### **West Association**

The local churches are independent registered associations.

### **South-West Association**

Some local churches are independent registered associations. Others form the Karlsruhe Area Registered Association

### **South Association**

Some local churches are independent registered associations. Other are part of area associations.

## E. INTERDENOMINATIONAL CONTACTS

### CONTACTS AND ASSOCIATIONS

The MV sees itself connected to all those churches for whom the gospel of Jesus Christ is central, and who declare their belief in the triune God with the apostolic creed.

The MV maintains good contacts with other Christian denominations.

It is a member of the Union of Evangelical Free Churches in Germany(VEF).

The MV is an honorary member of the Association of Christian Churches(ACK).

The MV is the oldest part of the German Pentecostal movement.

As well as the Forum of Pentecostal Free Churches(FFP) there are also interdenominational contacts in Germany. There are also good relationships with the European and worldwide Pentecostal movement.

Cooperation on a deeper level occurs within the framework of the Evangelical Alliance. There are contacts with other churches, free churches, associations and Christian work in the local areas. Since we are an evangelical charismatic movement, we consider that we are connected to the interdenominational charismatic movement and thus we maintain contact with a wide range of different churches.

### A LIVING FELLOWSHIP

In addition to official church contacts we are grateful for other fellowship links.

There are close relationships with a wide range of very different mission societies in Germany and beyond and the people they have sent out or supported.

Thus the churches in the MV have close contacts with :

- Bruecke der Hoffnung
- Campus for Christ
- Youth with a Mission(YWAM)
- Operation Mobilisation(OM)
- Royal Rangers
- Teen Challenge
- The Velberter Mission
- WEC
- various other missions

We thank God for all the spiritual input from His church.

## F. THE HISTORY OF THE MV

At the end of the nineteenth century Christians realised their Christianity had become rational and superficial. There was a longing for authority and holiness in spiritual life. God answered the prayers of many Christians with a new move of the Holy Spirit that was shown in revival, changed lives and the discovery of spiritual gifts. The Pentecostal movement was born.

The story of the Muelheimer Association started with the spiritual revival that God sent in 1905 to Muelheim on the Ruhr. This occurred in the meetings of a society of lay workers and pastors (including Moderson, Girkon, Vetter, Paul and Humburg). This society was given support by state churches, free churches and fellowships. Approximately three hundred believers considered this Christian society of Muelheim an der Ruhr as their spiritual home. In many areas of Germany groups sprung up which had experienced revival. Some churches in our association were founded in this period of time between 1905 and 1908.

Initially this movement was seen as an agent of change within the established churches. Through the emphasis on the working on the Holy Spirit according to the guidelines of the New Testament it was named Pentecostal both by supporters and critics. The supporters of this group in Germany and Europe met for the first time in Europe in 1908 at the Hamburg December Conference.

In 1909 there was a very significant development that affected the German Pentecostal movement. The round of Muelheimer conferences began that summer and were attended by many believers. Then misunderstandings, false interpretations and over-eagerness to control what was happening caused some church leaders and Christians to reject this Pentecostal movement. In the Berlin Declaration of 1909 approximately sixty leaders of the Gnadauer Fellowship and of the Evangelical Alliance dissociated themselves from the Pentecostal movement. They declared that the Spirit working at that time was not of God. The Muelheimer Declaration of 1909 was written in response to this. It recognised the failures within its own ranks, emphasised their openness to correction, but on the other hand could not accept the invalidity of the working of the Spirit. Consequently the two sides could not reach agreement. As a result the group that had been excluded needed to have a definite structural basis. In 1913 the umbrella organisation The Christian Society of Muelheim on the Ruhr, was formed. Since they did not believe they had separated for good, their goal was not to have the rights of a corporate body so they became a limited company instead.

In the years before and particularly after the First World War there were new churches in many places with their own church buildings. Later regions formed associations. The Leaders' Day in 1911 was the first time the entire German leadership met at a conference in Berlin, and this was to become an important focal point for the development of the leadership within the movement. Then the Second World War brought with it the loss of many works that were blossoming in the Eastern areas. In 1951 the churches in the then G.D.R. had their right of assembly withdrawn by the authorities. The work in the west continued successfully. Church members from the eastern areas and ethnic German refugees made their spiritual home here.

The Free Church identity became more and in evidence, although nevertheless all attempts to bridge the differences between the Berlin Factions were unsuccessful.

In 1970 the MV became an honorary member of the Association of Christian Churches in Germany. In many places there was deeper cooperation with the German Evangelical Alliance. In 1978 the MV was able to inaugurate its own conference centre in Niedenstein near Kassel. There were offices and a publishing house within this complex. 1981 featured an important development in interdenominational relationships: the MV became an honorary member of the Union of Evangelical Free Churches. Ten years later it became a full member. Eighty years after the signing of the Berlin Declaration the Evangelical Free Churches took their first steps towards reconciliation.

They felt that statements made in that declaration no longer applied to our association.

The MV maintains good relationships with some Pentecostal Churches within the Forum of Pentecostal Churches (FFP).

We are grateful for the increasing cooperation between the people of God in our country in recent years.

## G. APPENDIX

### THE APOSTLES' CREED

' I believe in God, the Father, the Almighty  
Maker of heaven and earth  
And in Jesus Christ,  
His only begotten Son, our Lord  
Conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
Born of the Virgin Mary,  
Who suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
Was crucified, died and was buried  
He descended into hell,  
On the third day He rose from the dead  
He ascended into heaven;  
He sits at the right hand of God, the Almighty Father;  
He will come again  
To judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
The Holy, Catholic Church,  
The fellowship of the holy, the forgiveness of sins,  
The resurrection of the dead  
And eternal life.'

### THE BASIS OF THE EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE OF 1970

Evangelical Christians believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the given revelation of the triune God and that the Gospel is a written historical faith. They emphasise the following dogma, which they see as fundamental to an understanding of faith and the resulting mutual love, practical ministry by Christians and evangelical outreach.

The omnipotence and grace of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in creation, care (for the world), revelation, salvation and the Last Judgement.

The godly inspiration of the Holy Scriptures and their resulting total reliability and authority in all matters of faith and lifestyle.

The utter sinfulness and guilt of fallen mankind, who are under God's wrath and damnation.

The substitutionary death of the Son of God who became man. His death is the only, all-embracing basis for salvation from the guilt and power of sin and its eternal consequences.

The justification of sinners through God's grace alone, because of faith in Christ, who was crucified and was raised from the dead.

The work of the Holy Spirit - inspiring, converting, indwelling and sanctifying.

The priesthood of all believers, who form the worldwide church, the Body whose head is Christ.

They are committed to spreading the Gospel in all the world according to the Great Commission.

The expectation of the personal, visible, return of the Lord Jesus Christ in power and glory.,,