

# EMBRACING UNITY AND TRUTH



WHAT WE BELIEVE IN MICC

1985

Munich International Community Church was founded in 1985,  
and by God's grace continues to proclaim the good news in 2018.

On the cover, the Münchner Kindl, symbol of the city of Munich atop the Neues Rathaus.  
Statue designed by Anton Schmid, forged by Hygin Kien, and installed in 1905.

On the cover: detail of a photograph by Rainer Viertlböck

# Embracing Unity and Truth

## TRUTHS WE HOLD IN MICC

GLORIFYING CHRIST • BALANCING UNITY AND TRUTH • TEACHING WITH LOVE

### *Unity and truth*

**T**Hese are beautiful words, powerful ideals, and biblical concepts. Regrettably, confusion has developed in the Church over them, and what was meant to be a glorious reality has become an elusive, fleeting, and sometimes divisive dream. On one extreme stand those determined to achieve unity at any cost, including the loss of truth; at the other edge stand those who claim that any pursuit of unity will come at the expense of truth.

In MICC we believe that we dare not neglect either concept. The Word of God commands us, and the love of God compels us to uncompromisingly pursue both unity and truth

#### **THE CALL TO UNITY AND TRUTH**

Munich International Community Church believes that God has called and is calling all true Christians to true biblical unity in our day. Therefore, from our founding, we have sought to find a common ground of doctrine and truth on which all Christians can unite. We are thus committed as a church to pursuing both unity among Christians and the truth of God's Word.

In obedience to God and His Word, we do not believe that either truth or unity should be sacrificed for the other. Each is vital to accomplish God's purposes. People, created as God's image bearers, should not be battered by the truth, or in the name of truth. Truth, revealed by God in His Word, should not be disregarded in order to preserve a relationship or a feeling of unity. Either of these extremes is an offense against God, who created people and revealed truth for our good and His glory.

Jesus Christ was uncompromising in the truth as he forcefully opposed the errors of the Pharisees and Sadducees. He was equally uncompromising in his love as he forcefully

opposed the sins of the Samaritan woman (John 4) and the woman taken in adultery (John 8). Jesus consistently maintained a distinction between a person and the falsehood or sin embraced by the person; he was firm for the truth and against error, steadfast for righteousness and unhesitating to convict of sin, yet he acted and spoke from the depths of his love.

We recognize that our ultimate unity has been accomplished by our Lord through His death on the cross, and that the sectarian squabbles within the church have hurt the cause of the kingdom. We feel compelled, therefore, to call believers together in Munich to worship together according to our highest common denominators—undivided faith in Christ, undying love for one another, and a unswerving commitment to the truth of God’s Word. Our pursuit of unity, then, is based on a core theology of historic doctrines of the Church, contained in our Doctrinal Statement. (See back of this brochure). Outside of this core, there are areas in which we may gently and lovingly exercise freedom as we embrace all that God allows and approves.

## **OUR DOCTRINAL FOUNDATION**

In everything we do, we seek to be guided and informed by biblical truth, and the doctrines at the core are the foundational truths on which we agree. Upon these central doctrines, as individuals we may develop and hold other doctrines which are not central to the gospel and which reflect different perspectives and emphases. On these issues, there must be room for acceptance, grace, listening, and yet loving, sensitive, disagreement in the family.

### **The Word of God**

At a time when surveys indicate that up to forty-two percent of those who call themselves evangelical Christians believe that there is no absolute truth, MICC takes the stand that the Bible is absolute truth, and that it is absolutely true—it is the inspired and inerrant Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16). Although in our postmodern age, many in the Church have expressed discomfort with this subject of inerrancy, we believe that everything hinges upon it. If we believe the Bible has errors, we place ourselves above it, determining for ourselves what is and what is not truth. But if the Bible is the infallible revelation of the almighty God, then we must place ourselves under its authority in all things, even though our understanding of some things may be incomplete.

### **The Godhead**

We do not believe that it is enough merely to call men and women to worship God. The word of God says we are to worship Him in spirit and truth (John 4:24). We do not want people to only have their emotions stirred by music or to worship the experience of

worship. Our desire is that all who come to MICC would bow before the true and living God, the One who created all things and is supreme over all things (Col. 1:15-20). Our question for everyone is this, are you worshipping some vague idea of God, or the one true God revealed in the Bible—the One who eternally exists in three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit? This is the God we believe in, and the God we want to introduce to the international community in Munich

### **Jesus Christ**

Some people just want to lift up Jesus, believing that in so doing all men will be drawn to Him. But this will happen only if the authentic, biblical Jesus is exalted (Gal. 1:6-9). Only a clear understanding of God's Word will lead men to exalt the Jesus who is God of very God; the Jesus who took on human flesh, was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, and died on the cross in the place of sinners as payment for sin; the Jesus who was buried, and who was physically raised from the dead on the third day, who was seen by witnesses, has ascended on high, who sits at the right hand of God and intercedes for us, and who will return visibly and bodily to earth, to raise the dead, judge the world, and establish His eternal kingdom.

### **The Holy Spirit**

Although there is often disagreement or controversy over some issues related to the Holy Spirit, we believe that there is substantial clarity in God's Word which we need to understand about the person and work of the Holy Spirit. He is not simply an impersonal "force" that we can call on at a whim, but He is the third Person of the Trinity who gives us new birth, who baptizes, seals and indwells all believers at the moment of salvation, and enables us to walk in obedience and holiness, doing the will of the Father for His glory and our joy (John 16:13). This is the Holy Spirit we want God's people to understand and experience.

### **Sin and Salvation**

In our day, an alarming percentage of those who claim to be Christians believe that they can have eternal life and get to heaven by good works. However, the Bible tells us that salvation is not by works, but by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Born into this world with a sinful nature and separated from God by our sins, we are dependent on God to do the work of restoring a relationship with Him through justification (declaring us righteous before his throne), propitiation (turning aside his wrath), reconciliation (removing sin as a basis for enmity), and regeneration (giving us new birth as new creatures in Christ). Because this is a work of God's grace and not man's effort, it depends on His power and not ours. Therefore it is a relationship that is eternally secure.

## The Church

Often in her history, the Church has not displayed her identity as the radiant and glorious bride of Christ. Sin, pride, greed and corruption have, from time to time, established strongholds in the Church and neutralized her fruitfulness. Some, observing the ineffectiveness and inefficiency of the Church in ministry, have left the Church to join with the para-church ministries. Others, having been deeply wounded by or disappointed in the institutional Church, have chosen to stay away, and vainly attempt to live an isolated, independent Christian life.

Missions leader Michael Griffiths notes that “sometimes in the West, we have lost sight of the importance of basic Christian communities, thinking that churches are merely incidental organizations within institutional Christianity. We think that the gospel tells how an individual may be saved. But the letter to the Ephesians [2:19] declares that both individual salvation and the corporate community are essential parts of the gospel.... God’s long term purpose is to produce a new, beautiful, redeemed human society in which he himself will dwell.”<sup>1</sup>

In the New Testament, the Church is described as a community of believers, a household, and a family. In MICC, we vividly experience the variety of unity in the Church. We are made up of people from many different backgrounds, nationalities, and cultures, yet we are bound together by the common conviction that Christ is all and in all (Col. 3:11).

As the church, we who have trusted in the Lord Jesus as our Saviour are the body of Christ on earth, submitted to His headship; we are not an afterthought in the mind of God, but the focus of his work to display His glory before all nations. We exist to exalt the triune God, to edify believers, and to evangelize unbelievers all for the sake of His holy name.

## WHAT WE BELIEVE

The ideas inside this section comprise the core beliefs in our Doctrinal Statement, which is found on pages 32-33. They provide a firm biblical foundation upon which we as Christians can join together and live out the unity called for in John 17:22-23, where Jesus prayed to the Father, “I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one... May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”

In MICC we wish to join hearts and minds around these core truths and regain the salty taste and light bearing influence we are designed to have in the world. We do not want to see all denominational distinctives disappear or just blend into a bland pureé. Rather, in our international and non-denominational context, while we recognize our differences, we choose to seek what is good, and then to hold onto it tightly.

We are committed to calling men and women to reach beyond labels and to enter into strong, fruitful relationships with each other based on our common faith in Jesus Christ, and our common submission to the authority of His word.

Through loving relationships we can demonstrate hope to a hopelessly divisive world. By God's grace, we can live together in unity in spite of our differences.

## **THE CALL TO UNITY**

Our commitment to pursue both unity and truth is not new to our generation. In the seventeenth century, Rupertus Meldenius, a German theologian, coined the phrase,

*In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity.*

It is with this kind of commitment to God's truth, and to one another as God's people, that we want to display the greatness and grace of God to the world.

Individual preferences and convictions on biblical doctrines that are outside the boundary of our church's Doctrinal Statement may be taught in small groups, in classes, in individual conversations, or from the pulpit. However, these convictions must be presented charitably and sensitively, demonstrating a commitment to the truth of Scripture as well as a deep love for the brothers and sisters in the body of Christ.

## **THE CALL TO TRUTH**

Simultaneously, as we call for love and unity, we call all Christians to a relentless pursuit of truth in the faithful study of God's Word. Human opinions will come and go; worldly powers will rise and fall; popular trends will recycle themselves. But the Word of God endures forever. It is in this truth that we can find biblical unity—unity in truth. We choose to love God, to love His truth, and to love one another. In this way, we believe that when we stand before Jesus on that Day, having striven for this ideal, we will hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant." For our Savior's sake, for His glory, and for the hope that the world will then know that God has sent Him, we can do no less.

Some portions of this section are adapted from *Biblical Unity and Biblical Truth*, by Glenn Wagner

<sup>1</sup>Michael C. Griffiths, *What on Earth Are You Doing?: Jesus' Call to World Mission*, p. 38.

# Munich International Community Church

## DOCTRINAL STATEMENT • 1985

**M**UNICH INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY CHURCH is not affiliated with any one church or denomination. As evangelical Christians we accept wholeheartedly the revelation of God given in the Old and New Testaments and expressed in such historic statements of the Christian Church as the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed.

We embrace the following areas of doctrinal teaching on which there is general agreement among evangelical Christians both historically and on the contemporary scene.

However, we desire to allow for freedom of conviction on doctrinal matters not specifically delineated in the following statement of faith, providing that any interpretation is based on the Bible alone and that no such interpretation shall become an issue which hinders the unity of this body or the ministry to which God has called us.

1. We believe the Bible is the written Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, inerrant in the original manuscripts and possessing God's authority in all matters of faith and life.
2. We believe in one God, Creator of all things, perfect in love and righteousness, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, equal in power and worthy of worship and obedience.
3. We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary and is true God and true man; that He died to atone for our sins; that He was raised from the dead bodily, ascended into heaven and is presently interceding for us at the Father's right hand.
4. We believe that the Holy Spirit baptizes, seals and indwells all believers at the moment of salvation; and that He is the believer's teacher, guide and power for godly living.
5. We believe that man was created in the image of God; that he sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death, but also spiritual death, which is separation from God; and that all men are born with a sinful nature, falling short of being morally or spiritually acceptable to God in thought, word and deed.
6. We believe that a man is saved solely through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and is thereby justified before God, born of the Holy Spirit, and placed into God's family, a relationship in which he is eternally secure.
7. We believe in the visible and bodily return to earth of Jesus Christ, to raise the dead, judge the world and establish His eternal kingdom; and that those who are believers shall live with God forever, while unbelievers shall be eternally separated from Him.
8. We believe that the Church is the living body of Christ on earth, Christ being its Head; that the body is composed of all those who have received Him as Savior and Lord; and that the local church exists as an expression of the universal Church to exalt God, edify believers and evangelize nonbelievers.

# ICC Statement of Faith

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES • 13 JUNE 2009

*ICC is a group of English-speaking, evangelical Christian churches that hold to these essential historic and Christian beliefs as summarized in this statement of faith.*

## **1. GOD**

There is one God, Creator and Lord of the Universe, who eternally exists in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three persons are equal in power, glory and divine perfection, and are worthy of worship and obedience.

## **2. THE BIBLE**

The Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, is the inspired, revealed, inerrant, infallible Word of God, and is our full and final authority, sufficient in all matters of faith and practice.

## **3. THE HUMAN RACE**

All men and women are created in the image of God with equal and inherent value and dignity, yet through Adam's disobedience and our own personal choice are sinners, alienated from God, under his condemnation and wrath, and thus in need of redemption.

## **4. THE LORD JESUS CHRIST**

Jesus Christ, fully God and fully man, was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died in the place of sinners on the cross, accomplishing redemption by bearing the punishment and wrath for all who believe, rose bodily from the dead and ascended to heaven where, as the only mediator between God and man, he intercedes for his people, and from where he will return in power and glory.

## **5. SALVATION**

Salvation is by grace, through faith in Christ alone. It has been accomplished by Jesus Christ, and is proclaimed and offered to all in the gospel. All who repent and believe are forgiven, justified, and made new creatures in Christ, receiving the gift of eternal life and adoption into God's family.

## **6. THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The Holy Spirit has been sent from heaven to glorify Christ and to apply his work of salvation. He convicts sinners, imparts spiritual life and gives a true understanding of the Scriptures. He indwells all believers, distributes spiritual gifts, brings assurance of salvation and produces increasing likeness to Christ. He builds up the Church and empowers its members for worship, service and mission.

## 7. THE CHURCH

The church is one holy and universal body and bride of Christ. The church is composed of all who are redeemed through the work of Christ and is called to worship God and to witness concerning her Head, Jesus Christ.

The local church proclaims, values, and submits to the whole counsel of God, administers baptism and communion as signs of the Gospel, and exercises spiritual authority to care for her members and fulfill her mission of making disciples of all nations.

Unity among local churches is expressed within and between churches by mutual love, care and encouragement. True fellowship between churches exists only where they are faithful to the gospel.

## 8. THE RETURN OF CHRIST AND THE FUTURE

Jesus Christ will personally and visibly return in glory to raise the dead and bring salvation and judgment to completion: those joined to Christ by faith will be brought into fullness of eternal life and joy in Christ, those alienated from Christ will be eternally separated from God. God will fully establish His kingdom with a new heaven and new earth, in which He will be glorified forever, having triumphed over all evil, suffering, and death.

The above Statement of Faith was drafted by ICC affiliated pastors in April 2009, and adopted by the ICC board in June 2009.

Steve Henderson, pastor of MICC led this drafting committee, comprised of pastors from English speaking international churches in France, Italy, Germany, England, Czech Republic, and Romania.

Along with these affirmations, the pastors also reviewed supporting documents which offer a larger and more detailed exposition of the core doctrines and reflect the stream of evangelical conviction on the gospel from 1974 to the present.

These statements were:

*The Lausanne Covenant* (1974), *The Gospel: A Call to Evangelical Faith* (1999), and *The Gospel Coalition: Foundational Documents* (2007).

MICC is in the process of adopting this Statement of Faith, replacing our earlier Doctrinal Statement.

For more information, on the churches in ICC, visit [www.icceurasia.com](http://www.icceurasia.com)

<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>AFFIRMED</b>	<b>OPEN</b>	<b>DENIED</b>
<b>God</b>	Trinity Aseity Creator	Emotions Attributes	Modalism Tritheism Arianism
<b>Bible</b>	Authority Inerrancy Sufficiency 66 books OT/NT	Interpretation Authorship Textual Translations	Not final authority Errors present Additional Books Book of Mormon
<b>Human Race</b>	Image: M/F Fallen in Adam	Soul-Spirit-Body	Evolved
<b>Jesus</b>	God/Man Virgin born Sacrificial death Bodily Resurrection Ascension/Return	Miracles: human or divine?	Arianism Docetism Modalism
<b>Salvation</b>	By grace through faith Secure in Christ	Election: corporate/individual Baptism mode Extent of atonement	Merit/works Ritual Universalism Can be revoked
<b>Holy Spirit</b>	Deity Personality Ministry Gifts	Continuation Cessation	Impersonal Power source Optional
<b>Church</b>	Body of Christ Worship/witness Ordinances	Polity Para-church Music styles	Church obsolete
<b>End Times</b>	Kingdom Return New heaven/earth Joy Judgment/wrath	Timing A-/Pre-/Post- Rapture	No return Annihilationism Reincarnation



# MUNICH INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY CHURCH

Steve Henderson, Pastor • [steve@munichurch.de](mailto:steve@munichurch.de) • [www.munichurch.de](http://www.munichurch.de)  
Sunday Worship Services at 3:30 pm • Mozartstraße 12 • U3/U6 Goetheplatz