

## **Elder Appointee Rev. Ines-Paul Baumann**

What are my hopes for serving as an Elder in MCC?

*A few words about me:*

*My first name „Ines-Paul“ indicates that I'm no longer willing to believe that there are only 2 genders we can be. For me, having been born female didn't make me a woman, and looking male now doesn't make me a man. I am one of three parents raising two kids (aged 4 and 6). I work half-time as a Webdeveloper in a secular company. I am pastoring MCC in Cologne (Germany) with a worship-attendance of 15-25. My main spiritual gifts have been „diagnosed“ leadership, teaching, evangelism and administration.*

I came to MCC in 2004. There were many things that soon made want to serve within MCC; let me share five of them that relate to my own gifts and experiences:

1. I embrace the variety of faith traditions and spiritual types in MCC (including „non-/different-believers“).
2. I understand activism for human rights not just FOR, but also AS and WITH marginalized – and not limited to the LGBT-community.
3. I affirm many genders (referring to our images of GOD as well) and (a/)sexualities.
4. I think that repeatedly adjusting callings and structures is not a failure, but can be an achievement.
5. I am experienced with organizations that don't gain too much strength from „powerful“ ressources like money, tradition and hierarchy. (It always reminds me of the way Jesus acted: humbly, committed, loving, sharing, trusting.)

I soon came to realize that the last two points also can be a source of frustration, especially in the international context. One of the struggles for people in Germany and Europe was, that the fellowship to us feels very much based on the culture and values of the USA. I often heard people longing e.g. for elders from a variety of cultures.

So, when I was being asked if I want to apply, I thought this might be a good opportunity to raise the diversity in the Council of Elders. I hope that my experiences will help in listening carefully to the voices of cultures from all over the world as well (including those from the US).

Having experienced quite a few transitions in my own life provides me with open eyes for transformations in other contexts, also. The global world is changing a lot right now - in communication, economy, handling ressources, interacting of cultures and religions.

Christianity as we have known it for centuries is changing as well.

MCC in my eyes is well prepared to be an important and attractive part in these changes – not because everything always works fine. But vice versa: because we know that we must change as well, from time to time, from place to place. I hope to be a help in transforming ourselves as we transform at least parts of the worlds we are part of.

Thank you for being committed to MCC in your part of the world. I hope that as an Elder I can serve you in serving those around you. God bless you and those with you!