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The Founding of the European Evangelical Alliance as a Counter-Movement to the World Evangelical Fellowship

Frank Hinkelmann

On 19 September 1952, representatives of several national Evangelical Alliances (EAs) from Europe met in Hamburg, Germany. They came at the invitation of the German Evangelical Alliance (DEA) to officially constitute the European Evangelical Alliance (EEA). Why was the EEA founded? Why did these national EAs not join the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF), which had been founded at a conference in the Netherlands in August 1951?

This article traces the motives and reasoning of several national EAs in Europe in establishing the EEA, which were predominantly theologically and partially culturally driven. I also consider how the theological differences unfolded in the following years. Special attention is given to three EAs: the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) in the USA, the British EA and the DEA. As we will see, the NAE would become the driving force for forming a new international body representing evangelicals. The British EA had been the coordinating body of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) since the British EA's beginnings in 1846, and the DEA can be taken as representative of those EAs on the European continent that decided not to join the WEF and instead founded the EEA.[1]

Most research on the history of the evangelical alliances has focused on either the nineteenth century or individual countries.[2] In addition, there

1 An additional reason for choosing Germany is that many original sources on the DEA have been preserved on both sides of the Atlantic—in the DEA archives in Bad Blankenburg, and on the WEF at the Billy Graham Center (hereafter BGC) archives, Wheaton, IL.

2 On the nineteenth century, see Gerhard Lindemann, *Für Frömmigkeit in Freiheit: die Geschichte der Evangelischen Allianz im Zeitalter des Liberalismus (1846–1879)* (Munster, Zurich and Vienna: LIT-Verlag, 2011); Hans Hauzenberger, *Einheit auf evangelischer Grundlage: vom Werden und Wesen der Evangelischen Allianz* (Giessen and Zürich: Brunnen/Gotthelf, 1986). On the EA in Great Britain, see Ian Randall and Davis Hilborn, *One Body in Christ: The History and Significance of the Evangelical Alliance* (Carlisle: Pater-

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have been some studies on specific themes[3] and some more popular *Festschriften*.[4] However, to this date no research has been done on the origin and history of the EEA. The present article fills this gap by evaluating and analysing primary sources from the founding period of both the WEF and EEA.

I. The Beginnings

In the closing chapter of a book commissioned by the WEA on its hundredth anniversary in 1946, author John Ewing, then the WEA's vice president, wondered about the future:

> Now the questions arise, can the Alliance continue its usefulness? And is it likely to be needed under the changed conditions of this new time? That the conditions are changed admits no doubt. A hundred years ago the Alliance stood alone as a uniting Christian fellowship. Since that time many other uniting movements have sprung up.[5]

Ewing expressed the view that the WEA still had a promising future.[6]

However, only a few years later reality showed a different picture. In a document described as 'Recordings of the talks between the German committee of the Evangelical Alliance and representatives of the Evangelical Alliances of Great Britain, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and Austria during the spring meeting of the German branch of the Evangelical Alliance at the Patmos Retreat Centre in Geisweid in Westfalen close to Siegen from 3 to 5 May 1952',[7] General Sir Arthur Smith of the British EA was

noster, 2004); J. B. A. Kessler, *A Study of the Evangelical Alliance in Great Britain* (Goes: Oosterbaan & Le Cointre, 1968). On Germany: Erich Beyreuther, *Der Weg der Evangelischen Allianz in Deutschland* (Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 1969) and Werner Beyer, (ed.), *Einheit in Vielfalt: aus 150 Jahren Evangelischer Allianz* (Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 1995). On Austria: Frank Hinkelmann, *Geschichte der Evangelischen Allianz in Österreich: von ihren Anfängen im 19. Jahrhundert bis in die Gegenwart*, rev. and enlarged edition (Bonn: VKW, 2012).

3 J. Cochlovius, 'Das Selbstverständnis der Evangelischen Allianz in der Gründerzeit und heute: die Hauptbeschlüsse der Londoner Gründungsversammlung 1846 im Vergleich mit der Glaubensbasis der Evangelischen Allianz von 1972', *Freikirchenforschung* 10 (2000): 157–66; Karl Heinz Voigt, *Die Evangelische Allianz als ökumenische Bewegung: freikirchliche Erfahrungen im 19. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Christliches Verlagshaus, 1990); and Karl Heinz Voigt and Thomas Schirrmacher (eds.), *Menschenrechte für Minderheiten in Deutschland und Europa: vom Einsatz für Religionsfreiheit durch die Evangelische Allianz und die Freikirchen im 19. Jahrhundert* (Bonn: Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft, 2004).

4 John W. Ewing, *Goodly Fellowship: A Centenary Tribute to the Life and Work of the World's Evangelical Alliance 1846–1946* (London and Edinburgh: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1946); W. Harold Fuller, *People of the Mandate: The Story of the World Evangelical Fellowship* (Carlisle: WEF/Paternoster, 1996).

5 Ewing, *Goodly Fellowship*, 146.

6 Ewing, *Goodly Fellowship*, 150.

7 German original: *Niederschrift über das Gespräch zwischen dem Deutschen Komitee der Evangelischen Allianz in England, Dänemark, Norwegen, Schweden, Schweiz und Österreich anläßlich der Frühjahrssitzung des Deutschen Zweiges der Evangelischen Allianz im Erholungsheim Patmos in Geisweid in Westfalen b. Siegen vom 3.–5.3.1952*, DEA archives. All translations from German into English are by the author.

quoted: 'In recent years, in the UK the Alliance only had the week of prayer. We were only active on paper—that was all. When the Americans came and looked for a World Alliance, they didn't find any.'[8] F. R. Cattell, General Secretary of the British EA, added, 'The British Alliance did little if nothing except the week of prayer. The NAE led us to a new drive.'[9]

The minutes of those meetings concluded with this statement: '1. The British acknowledge that the British Alliance hasn't been in recent years what they ought to be. 2. A longing can be observed to shape the old British Alliance in a more lively way.'[10]

Before this, in 1950, J. Elwin Wright, general director of the NAE, reported a similarly dissatisfied perspective on the British EA to the NAE's board of administration:

> It was very evident at Clarens [a conference in Switzerland] in 1948 that it [the British EA] was not, as then constituted, at all adequate. While it was 103 years old it did not have the confidence and respect of the leading evangelicals, either in Europe or on the Continent. The principal reasons were (1) an executive secretary who had served 45 years and was in his dotage; (2) his ignorance of the issues between modernism and evangelicalism of the present day; (3) the lack of any constructive program which would challenge evangelical interest.[11]

These comments highlight the problems that the WEA was facing in the years after World War II. Since the EA's beginnings in 1846, the British EA had always been the driving force of the WEA; in many ways the British EA *was* the WEA, especially since the EA added the attribute 'World' when it became legally registered in 1912.[12] *Evangelical Christendom*, the WEA's magazine (itself published by the British EA), addressed this matter in a special edition in fall 1949:

> It has been revealed that there is a feeling that the Alliance is too much centred upon Britain and that the words 'British Organisation', which appear on everything printed here, are misunderstood in some countries as meaning that the World Evangelical Alliance is a 'British Organisation'. This tends to hold some back from closer co-operation with the parent body, and in some cases led to a national organisation being formed with the same aims and objects as the Evangelical Alliance but adopting another name in order to keep its national identity. In actual fact the words should be interpreted as meaning the 'British Section' of the World Evangelical Alliance.[13]

8 *Niederschrift*, 3–4.

9 *Niederschrift*, 4.

10 *Niederschrift*, 4.

11 Wright was referring to Henry Martyn Gooch, who became secretary of the British EA in 1904. Ewing continued to praise Gooch in his centenary tribute to the WEA. See Ewing, *Goodly Fellowship*, 133.

12 Ewing, *Goodly Fellowship*, 129.

13 *Evangelical Christendom*, special issue, *The New Alliance* (October-December 1949), BGC archives collection 338, II. Secretaries/Directors, A. J. Elwin Wright, Box 12, Folder 13, Switzerland, 1948–1958. See also *Richtlinien des gegenwaertigen Standes Evangelischer Zusammenarbeit und der Platz der Evangelischen Welt-Allianz in der zukuenftigen Entwicklung* (n.d., DEA archives), 2. This document was most likely written for the

In a 'Memorandum on the Present Position of Evangelical Co-Operation and of the Place of the World's Evangelical Alliance in Possible Future Development', German leaders expressed similar concern about the WEA's lack of international effectiveness:

> It should be clearly understood that at the present time the WEA is not an internationally controlled organization, and there is no council or committee which has representatives of the different overseas movements serving on it. The last international conference was held in 1907. The organization in Great Britain is only responsible for the work carried on in this country [i.e. the UK], with a friendly link, but no authority, over any of the overseas organizations.[14]

The document further noted that the WEA's articles of association had been drawn up in 1912 and were substantially outdated.

It is clear that the British EA was no longer in a position to be an international driving force. Instead, the NAE in the United States, which had been constituted in 1942, took the lead.

II. Growing North American Interest in Europe

Following the war, North American Christians became increasingly interested in cooperation with Christians in Europe[15] and beyond. The NAE thus emerged as a key player in the further development and renewal of the evangelical movement.[16] The NAE held to the classic evangelical beliefs and to the authority of Scripture but rejected the polemical and separatist approach of fundamentalism. The so-called 'new evangelicals' driving this effort included such key figures as Harold John Ockenga and Billy Graham.[17]

World Alliance gathering at Hildenborough Hall, England in March 1950.

14 *Richtlinien*, 2.

15 Hans Krabbendam, 'Introduction: American Evangelical Missions in Postwar Europe' in John Corrigan and Frank Hinkelmann (eds.), *Return to Sender: American Evangelical Missions to Europe in the 20th Century* (Munster: LIT-Verlag, 2019), 9–16.

16 Joel Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 141ff., describes the founding of the NAE, showing why it did not represent simply a continuation of the EA of the nineteenth century. See also Robert L. Kennedy, *Turning Westward: Anglo-American Evangelicals and German Pietist Interactions through 1954* (PhD dissertation, University of Aberdeen, 1988), 338ff.

17 George M. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995); Derek J. Tidball, *Who Are the Evangelicals? Tracing the Roots of Today's Movement* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1994), 69–72; Garth M. Rosell, *The Surprising Work of God: Harold Ockenga, Billy Graham, and the Rebirth of Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, Baker, 2008). On the NAE, see Denton Lotz, 'The *Evangelization of the World in this Generation': The Resurgence of a Missionary Idea among Conservative Evangelicals* (PhD dissertation, Hamburg University, 1970); Mark Ellingsen, *The Evangelical Movement: Growth, Impact, Controversy* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1988), 98–102. Ockenga coined the term 'new evangelicals'; see David M. Howard, *The Dream That Would Not Die: The Birth and Growth of the World Evangelical Fellowship 1846–1986* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1986), 4. On Graham's involvement in Europe, see Uta Andrea Balbier, *Billy Graham in West Germany: German*

Besides the NAE, the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC), a group remaining in the fundamentalist camp, reached out to Europe, sending Francis Schaeffer as a missionary.[18] These entities were in effect in competition with the WEA and the more ecumenical World Council of Churches, formed in 1948, as interdenominational organizations.[19]

As both the ICCC and NAE had their roots in North American fundamentalism, they initially encountered reticence in Europe. In an April 1948 letter to the chair of the German EA in April 1948, British EA secretary Henry Martyn Gooch warned about 'American fundamentalists' who had created 'a lot of harm with their legalistic zeal' and their literal interpretation of Scripture.[20] He also stated that no American group was connected to the WEA.

This fear of American fundamentalism being exported to Europe repeatedly impacted relations between North American and European evangelicals throughout the period. It helped to keep the ICCC isolated, especially in view of that organization's strong attacks on both the WCC and NAE. As a result, the NAE became the main interlocutor between US and European evangelicals, but fears of its purportedly fundamentalist position remained.

III. The NAE Initiates the WEF

A report in *Evangelisches Allianzblatt*, the DEA's magazine, in 1951 shed further light on the NAE's growing influence and some recent developments:

> Already during the war the NAE begin to act far beyond the American continent as they got in touch with evangelical Christians in Central and South America as well as with brothers and sisters in faith on the mission fields of the Far East, in Indonesia, in India and Ceylon, in Africa, and other places. … After the war was over, the NAE movement also crossed over to Europe. …
>
> Automatically, the question arises, whether or not it would be appropriate and serving the purposes of God in the world in a much better way, when those two alliance movements, the Evangelical Alliance of 1846 and the NAE, join forces. The brothers in leadership in the British Evangelical Alliance took the initiative in this regard.[21]

In August 1948, the NAE leadership invited key international leaders to Clarens, Switzerland for a conference under the heading, 'In essentials,

Protestantism between Americanization and Rechristianization, 1954–70 (2010), www.zeithistorische-forschungen.de/16126041-Balbier-3-2010.

18 Markku Ruotsila, 'Francis Schaeffer in Europe: The Early Missionary Years', in John Corrigan and Frank Hinkelmann (eds.), *Return to Sender: American Evangelical Missions to Europe in the 20th Century* (Münster: LIT-Verlag, 2019), 17–31.

19 All four groups are listed in *Gesch. Vorst. Protokoll 18.+21.9.1948 in Weidenau* (DEA archives) as having invited participation by the German EA. The minutes specifically mention Schaeffer as an ICCC representative.

20 H. R. Leusser on behalf of Gooch to W. Zilz, 30 April 1948, DEA archives.

21 'Weltweite evangelische Bruderschaft', *Evangelisches Allianzblatt* 54 (1951): 152–53. The last sentence reflects the greater British openness to the NAE after Gooch retired, as discussed below.

unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, clarity.'[22] Among the prominent participants were Gooch, Martyn Lloyd-Jones and J. Edwin Orr from the UK; René Pache and Gertrude Wasserzug from Switzerland; and Billy Graham, Torrey Johnson, Bob Jones, Harold J. Ockenga and J. Elwin Wright from the US. Others, including the head of the DEA, received the invitation too late and could not obtain permission from the Allied forces in time to travel to Switzerland.

The goal of the conference, with sixty participants from fourteen countries, was to discuss how to strengthen cooperation among evangelicals.[23] In his report on the conference, Wright stated, 'In general, the delegates were in accord on all important issues which were considered'.[24]

The only strong opposition came from Gooch, who saw no need for a new form of cooperation besides the WEA. Gooch wrote to DEA chair Wilhelm Zils in December 1948, 'I note from your letter that you raise the question of the NAE Conference (proposed) in Zurich next year. Please understand the British Organisation is not taking part in such a Conference.' But a few months later, Gooch was forced to give up his position as WEA general secretary after forty-five years, and in his absence the British EA began to take a more positive attitude towards the NAE. Wright of the NAE wrote to Zils in August 1949, 'You will be pleased to hear … that the new Secretary General of the World Evangelical Alliance in Great Britain, Mr Roy Cattell, is very different from Mr Gooch in his attitude.'[25]

General agreement was also reached at Clarens on adopting the NAE's statement of faith for possible future cooperation. A follow-up conference was planned for 1949 in Zurich but, after a postponement, took place on 7–10 March 1950 at Hildenborough, England, with eighteen delegates from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Holland, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States.[26] This time the WEA (British EA) was the inviting party. Following the conference, the Austrian delegate reported, 'The conference decided on a co-operation between the Evangelical Alliance and the National Association of Evangelicals, as it was recognised with satisfaction that the statement of this association corresponds with the Alliance statement of faith'.[27]

The following recommendation (amongst others) was agreed on at

22 Welcome letter to the Clarens conference, DEA archives.

23 J. Elwin Wright to all invited delegates, n.d. See also Wright's report on the conference, BGC archives collection 338, II. Secretaries/Directors, G. Clyde Willis Taylor, Box 27, Folder 5.

24 Wright's report on the conference, BGC archives, 2.

25 Gooch to Wilhelm Zils, 6 December 1948; Wright to Zils, 2 August 1949, both in the DEA archives.

26 Report of the World Evangelical Alliance Conference held at Hildenborough, England, 7th to 10th March 1950, DEA archives. The joint secretaries of the British EA, H. W. Hall and Cattell, were also present, but not as delegates.

27 Gertrud Hoffmann, *Bericht von der Konferenz der Evangel. Weltallianz in Hildenborough vom 7.–11. März 1950, gegeben in Wien a, 11. April 1950 in der Allianzgemeinschaft, I. Bartensteingasse 14*, Austrian EA archives in Pöchlarn.

the end of the conference:

> The Conference agrees that there is a great need for Evangelical work and witness. This need is threefold: Personal, National, International.
>
> *Personal*, because we believe that the old evangelical message alone as given in the Holy Scripture can fully meet man's deepest need.
>
> *National*, because while the voices of modernism and sacerdotalism are constantly heard, we believe that evangelical truth is the most important factor on the formation of sound national character and outlook, and should be given fullest expression.
>
> *International*, because unity is strength, and it is essential that evangelical convictions be made known in International matters. …
>
> This International Committee will be formed of representatives of the National Branches of the World's [sic] Evangelical Alliance, of the National Association of Evangelicals, and of other Evangelical groups. Each member will undertake to agree either with the 1846 Basis of Belief of the W.E.A. or to the Statement of Faith of the N.A.E. The Committee will function until the ultimate objective of a fully constituted International Body can be brought into being, but it is clearly stated that this Committee is of advisory character, and will have no authority or control over the action of any country, all of which remain autonomous.[28]

Also, a larger follow-up conference was planned for 1952. The following months were to be used to work through open questions while the British EA agreed to manage administration for the time being. The minutes of the Interim Executive Committee meeting of January 1951 showed that a constitutional conference had already been scheduled for August of that year. Even the possible name for a new future evangelical body was discussed:

> Some considerable discussion took place over this very important question of the name. Drs Taylor and Wright, as a result of their visit to many countries, had come clearly to the conclusion that the name 'Fellowship' was what was really required, and would indicate the type of organization which was contemplated more clearly than any other word. This would at once remove considerable prejudice and fears that many countries had of another super organization. … This would thus make possible a name that was neither approaching 'World Evangelical Alliance' nor 'The National Association of Evangelicals'. Possibly, 'International Fellowship of Evangelicals' would be as good a title as any.[29]

At the same time, a growing opposition to such plans arose on the European continent. The DEA not only stressed the independence of each national EA branch, but also raised issues with regard to the statement of faith. The Germans proposed to

28 Report of the World Evangelical Alliance Conference, 2.

29 World Evangelical Alliance, *Report of the Meeting of an Interim Executive Committee at Woudschoten, Holland, January 1951*, 2. BGC archives collection 338, II. Secretaries/Directors, J. Elwin Wright, Box 8, Folder 3, Cattell, F. Roy, 1951–1955.

keep the EA's 1846 statement of faith, whereas the British delegation was much more open to agreeing to the NAE's statement.[30]

Interestingly, no further details are recorded about the exact theological concerns of the Germans and other European EAs concerning the proposed NAE statement, beyond their reservations about the use of the term 'infallible' (discussed below). This lack of specificity hints that underlying cultural issues and fears about some kind of American takeover contributed to the division. Also, the EAs of Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Switzerland expressed their concern about a new evangelical body that would no longer just gather individual evangelicals together (as the WEA had understood itself) but would also accept denominations, congregations and agencies into membership (as the NAE had done). All these national EAs remained in good standing with the WCC and wanted to maintain that status; moreover, they were not in favour of any competition.[31]

On 5–11 August 1951, the planned conference took place in Woudschoten, the Netherlands, with about one hundred participants from twenty-one countries, of whom eighteen were counted as voting members.[32] On Tuesday, a motion was passed to constitute the WEF.[33] 'It became clear that the Scandinavian branches of the World's Evangelical Alliance, for reasons of their own internal organizations, were not in favour of such a fellowship, but wished the Evangelical Alliance to continue as in the past.'[34] However, delegates from fourteen countries[35] agreed to constitute the WEF, while the national EAs were assured that they will keep their independence and national identity. This decision was to be brought for ratification to each national member. A statement of faith was unanimously accepted: 'We believe in the Holy Scripture, as originally given by God, divinely inspired, infallible, entirely trustworthy; and the supreme authority in all matters of faith'.[36]

A 'continuing committee' of eight

30 World Evangelical Alliance, *Report of Conference at Hamburg on Tuesday, 27th February and Wednesday, 28th February 1951*, DEA archives.

31 See 'Extracts from Letters from W.E.A. Branches on the Continent' (n.d.), BGC archives collection 338, I. Historical Files, Box 1, Folder 20, Woudschoten 1951.

32 For the list of participants, see 'International Conference of Evangelicals. Woudschoten, Holland—August 5–11, 1951', BGC archives collection 338, II. Secretaries/Directors, J. Elwin Wright, Box 8, Folder 3, Cattell, F. Roy, 1951–1955. There are contradicting dates given on the date of the conference. While some sources say August 5-11, others say August 4-10 or August 4-11. The minutes say that the meeting started on Saturday night, 4 August and ended on Friday, 11 August 1951.

33 See *The Motions Passed at the International Conference Held at Woudschoten, Holland, August 4-11, 1951,* BGC archives collection 338, II. Secretaries/Directors, J. Elwin Wright, Box 2, Folder 3, General Council Minutes; 1950-1967.

34 *Summary of the International Conference at Woudschoten, Holland, Aug. 4–10, 1951*, 1.

35 The motion was passed by majority vote, 14 to 4. Those opposed were Denmark, France, Norway and Sweden. See *The Motions Passed at the International Conference Held at Woudschoten*, 1.

36 World Evangelical Fellowship Constitution, 1–2, BGC archives collection 338, Historical Files, Box 1, Folder 20, Woudschoten 1951.

members was elected, and participants left Woudschoten with the expectation that things would move forward as agreed upon. The reports in Christian media on the conference were positive too.[37]

However, behind the scenes broader discomfort was percolating. The controversy centred on two issues: the use of the term 'infallible' to describe Scripture in the statement of faith, and a perceived anti-ecumenical stance by the WEF.

A meeting of European EAs was scheduled for Siegen, Germany on 3–5 March 1952. Five EAs were represented: the UK, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Switzerland. During this conference, the board of the DEA held a separate meeting and reached the following conclusion:

> The foundation for a 'World Fellowship', as proposed in the constitution of Woudschoten, doesn't appear viable to us, because it is too narrow and too legalistic. In addition, this can be gained only by the loss of those brethren who over many decades have stood together with us in the World Alliance [i.e. the Scandinavians].[38]

This decision was communicated to the delegates of the other countries, and those from Sweden, Denmark and Switzerland agreed with the DEA's position.

The remaining time at the conference was full of controversial discussions regarding the NAE's influence over the WEF. Whereas the British delegation was positive that they could influence the NAE to a more moderate position, Rev. Petersen of the Danish EA concluded otherwise:

> The NAE is predominantly made up of people who have detached themselves from other ecclesiastical institutions and gone their own way. We are afraid of this fiercely independent spirit of the NAE. The British will also have no power to control the NAE, even when they join them to do so, because they see their missionaries and their work as more evangelical than ours. The NAE might be good in the USA, but we don't need them on the continent.[39]

In a memorandum published immediately after this conference, the British delegation tried to refute some of the arguments against the NAE and to defend the use of the word 'infallible':[40]

> The British hold strongly the view that the intention of the 1846 Basis and 1951 Statement of Faith were

37 See 'Weltweite Evangelische Bruderschaft', 151–56.

38 *Niederschrift über das Gespräch zwischen dem Deutschen Komitee der Evangelischen Allianz und den Vertretern der Evangelischen Allianz in England, Dänemark, Norwegen, Schweden, Schweiz und Österreich anläßlich der Frühjahrssitzung des Deutschen Zweiges der Evangelischen Allianz im Erholungsheim Patmos in Geisweid in Westfalen b. Siegen vom 3.–5.3.1952*, DEA archives.

39 *Niederschrift vom 3.–5.3.1952*, 5.

40 World Evangelical Alliance, *Memorandum Prepared by the British Delegation Who Attended the German Conference Held at Patmos, 3rd–6th March 1952*, DEA archives. (Patmos was the name of the retreat centre in Siegen that hosted the conference. Other sources give the conference dates as 3–5 March.) The British EA felt that those present were not willing to distinguish between the NAE and the ICCC and their different position towards the WCC. Following the conference in Germany, much correspondence went back and forth between the DEA and representatives of the WEF.

essentially the same. In the words of our Articles of Association, the defence and advancement of what is commonly known as Evangelical Truth according to the text and teachings of the Holy Scriptures was (we believe) safeguarded in 1846 by that Basis which was sufficient for that date, and is now safeguarded by the 1951 Statement of Faith.

While we respect those who may think there is some basic difference between 1846 and 1951, we are not able to agree.

We believe the intention of 1846 was to safeguard what we in Great Britain know as the 'Conservative Evangelical' position. The Evangelical Alliance of Great Britain must humbly confess that a tendency to depart from this position in recent years largely led to ineffectiveness.

Para. I. There is no intention in this paragraph of requiring belief in 'a mechanical verbal inspiration'. In the British view the word 'infallible' is redundant and therefore unnecessary. But it was accepted at Woudschoten by a majority vote, and we therefore accept it.[41]

Other participants from continental Europe used catchwords like 'narrow and legalistic', 'fundamentalism', 'verbal inspiration', 'Judaistic eschatology' and 'wrong theory of inspiration' to describe the WEF's view of Scripture. They further objected to the WEF's expectation that members would sign the statement of faith annually.

IV. The Idea of a European Evangelical Alliance

The pendulum was swinging. At the Siegen conference, the idea of an EEA was mentioned for the first time.[42] After the four national delegations other than the British arrived at agreement on their position, they jointly informed the British 'that the German, Scandinavian and Swiss brethren have no joyfulness to affiliate with the World Evangelical Fellowship. We want to remain in fellowship with the British brethren.' At the completion of the three-day conference a decision was taken to form a 'European Committee of the Evangelical Alliance'. This committee was asked to act as the interim leadership of the EA in Europe. Several names of possible committee members were suggested.[43]

In a letter of 31 July 1952, Zils as chair of the DEA invited fellow EAs across Europe to a founding assembly of the EEA on 19 September 1952 in Hamburg. Official delegates from the EAs of Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Germany, Switzerland and Austria constituted the EEA. The British EA was invited but decided to send only an observer, agreeing to join the EEA some weeks later.[44] The official con-

41 World Evangelical Alliance, *Memorandum Prepared by the British Delegation.*

42 *Niederschrift vom 3.–5.3.1952*, 7.

43 *Niederschrift vom 3.–5.3.1952*, 10, 12. Interestingly, Friedrich Heitmüller of Hamburg and René Pache of Switzerland remained involved with the WEF and were even part of its International Council for some time. Heitmüller was strongly disappointed with some of the positions on Scripture held by other German EA members, as illustrated in a letter to Zils of 25 August 1952, contained in the DEA archives.

44 See *Bericht über die Unterredung zwischen Pastor Zils, Berleburg, und Pastor Dol-*

stitution of the EEA and a statement of faith were agreed on, and a board was elected. There was great unity on the way forward as no major discussions were recorded. In spring 1953, European EAs from France, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Finland and Yugoslavia were invited to join the EEA and to attend a conference planned for September 1953 in Siegen, Germany.[45]

Meanwhile, the WEF also attracted some followers in Europe. At a WEF General Committee meeting at Clarens, Switzerland on 28–30 July 1953, European participants came from Belgium, Cyprus, France, Germany (Friedrich Heitmüller), Greece, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Switzerland.[46]

V. Theological Accentuations

The newly approved constitution of the EEA stated very clearly in its first paragraph that it was taking the original 1846 WEA basis of faith as its foundation. A leaflet published and distributed by the DEA (probably in 1952) stated:

> The European Evangelical Alliance acknowledges as a foundation of fellowship and for its work those nine points which were agreed on at the founding session of the Evangelical Alliance in London, 1846. It appropriates the three declarations which were added by the fathers of the Evangelical Alliance to these nine points, in order to specify and mark the rights and the boundaries of brotherhood in the Alliance.[47]

The first of those nine points referred to the 'divine inspiration, authority, and sufficiency'—not the infallibility—of Scripture.

No further theological discussions were recorded within the EEA ranks, except for a letter of protest from the British EA, threatening to leave the EEA, due to an article published in the DEA's magazine in spring 1953. The British described the article as 'unsatisfactory in regard to the divine inspiration of Holy Scripture and [references to] theological liberalism amongst certain theologians on the Continent and in Scandinavia, although references to such were all outside of the ranks of the Evang. Alliance'.[48] This incident and some

man, Cambridge, in Berleburg am 7. August 1952, DEA archives. The British EA also indicated that the difference between the continental EAs and the British EA on their view of Scripture were more substantial than previously noted. However, a month later the British EA agreed to send two delegates to the committee meeting of the EEA.

45 Letter from the EEA Secretary (B. Petersen, Denmark) to 'our Evangelical Alliance brethren in France, Holland, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Finland and Yugoslavia', 6 April 1953, DEA archives.

46 See *Minutes of the First Meeting of the General Council Committee of the World Evangelical Fellowship Held at Clarens—28th to 30th July, 1953*, 1, BGC archive collection 338, Secretaries/Directors, G. Clyde Willis Taylor, Box 25, Folder 9, Executive Meetings 1951–1955.

47 From a leaflet published and distributed by the German EA (contained in the DEA archives) without any further bibliographical information, probably published soon after the Patmos conference of 1952 to which it refers.

48 *Protocol from the Meeting of the General Council of the European Evangelical Alliance in Connection with the first European Conference of the European Evangelical Alliance, in the Vereinshaus 'Hammerhütte', Siegen, West-*

talks given at a subsequent EA conference led to extensive correspondence between evangelical leaders in Germany and Great Britain, but the British EA remained a member of the EEA.

VI. Moving On

In view of the major dispute between the WEF and EEA in the early 1950s on the appropriate view of Scripture, which contributed to the establishment of two separate evangelical bodies, it seems surprising that during the following years only a few further discussions on the view of Scripture were recorded. Even at the EEA's annual general assemblies, the subject was scarcely ever mentioned. Only at the EEA General Assembly in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1957 did the relationship between the WEF and EEA become a point of discussion, probably in light of the WEF's desire to hold an international conference in Europe, which the EEA opposed.[49] No copy of the minutes seems to have been preserved, but only a response to questions raised at the assembly, which the British EA addressed in detail. The British EA further stated:

> We also sense a danger of an undue liberal influence sometimes intruding in European Evangelical Alliance outlook—a liberal and modern tendency which we know is not countenanced by our President, pastor Zils. …
>
> We also think that there are some brethren in the Evangelical Alliance of Europe who dislike the World Evangelical Fellowship Basis of Belief. We sincerely hope this is not true, for the British Evangelical Alliance would indeed have difficulty understanding anyone who without mental reservation accepts the Basis of Belief of 1846 in the language of the day, and yet who is unable to subscribe to the modern version as drawn up by the World Evangelical Fellowship.[50]

The EEA representatives raised questions at this 1957 meeting about the WEF's attitude towards the WCC and the NAE's influence on the WEF. The most important question about Scripture was 'Does not the WEF Basis lay down belief in 'verbal inspiration?' The answer was as follows:

> These words do not appear in the Basis. The word INFALLIBLE causes difficulty to some because it is liable to be wrongly interpreted as signifying 'mechanical' view of inspiration. In actual fact the British delegation were NOT in favour of adding this word to the Basis because they considered it redundant and therefore unnecessary. We also thought it misleading. However, by majority vote it was included. In all matters of doctrine there must be some latitude in interpretation of *details*, but there can be no compromise regarding the *principle* of belief that the Bible *is* (and does not merely contain) the Word of God and as such is en-

ph., Germany, September 10th, 1953, 2, DEA archives. See also *Entwurf einer Erklärung der englischen Vertreter bei der europäischen Konferenz in Siegen* (n.d.), DEA archives.

49 This is hinted at in a September 1957 *Memorandum for the European Evangelical Alliance*, signed by Arthur Smith and Gilbert Kirby and preserved in the DEA archives.

50 *Memorandum for the European Evangelical Alliance*.

tirely reliable and sufficient.

We do indeed believe, consistently with the Bible's own claims, that the Holy Spirit spoke through human authors so directly that their words were in a very real sense His words, but we do not imagine that the process was a mechanical one.

The word INFALLIBLE does mean that we believe God ensured that no mistakes appeared in the Holy Scriptures as originally given and that the Bible conveys with accuracy God's message to man, whether given in literal or symbolic form or by way of parable.[51]

At the EEA's October 1960 General Assembly, held in England, the EEA–WEF relationship was again discussed. Special attention was given to the NAE's relationship with the ICCC. Because ICCC representatives (such as René Pache from Switzerland) had been present at the 1951 Woudschoten meeting, the NAE was accused of cooperating with the ICCC. EEA leaders seemed unwilling to believe the WEF's statement that it had broken off fellowship with the ICCC, even though leading ICCC figure Carl McIntire had been attacking the NAE since the late 1940s, accusing it of having become too ecumenical.

Through the British EA, the WEF reached out regularly to EEA members, inviting them to join the WEF as well. This invitation was consistently rejected, and in 1962 a representative of the Swedish EA emphatically demanded that the WEF be told definitively that a link with the EEA was out of the question.[52] However, the EEA board did not follow this course and continued talks with the WEF, especially as the General Secretary of the British EA, Gilbert Kirby, assumed the role of WEF Secretary General in 1962. The EEA board met with Kirby in September 1962, but positions had not changed in any way by this point.

The first change of attitude on the EEA side could be observed in 1964:

> The brethren present here are of the opinion that under certain conditions a closer collaboration would be possible; that is, both sides should not stop at the different formulations of their basis. We trust each other that both sides, both the WEF and the EEA, will have basically the same unbroken position on Scripture. On this basis, it is conceivable that the EEA will join the worldwide WEF and represent the WEF's concerns, which it recognizes as its own, in Europe.[53]

What led to this change of attitude is unclear. Perhaps the EEA was reassessing its understanding of Scripture in response to the growth of liberal theology on the European continent. Several speeches given at EEA general assemblies in the mid-1960s on the authority of Scripture hint at this explanation.[54] In 1965, the EEA board

51 *Appendix B to Memorandum for the European Evangelical Alliance*, October 1957, 1 (emphasis in original), DEA archives.

52 See *Europäischer Rat der Evangelischen Allianz: Sitzung des Präsidiums vom 10.–11. Juli 1962 im Bapt. Theol. Seminary in Rüschlikon bei Zürich*, DEA archives.

53 *Rat der Europäischen Evangelischen Allianz: Sitzung des Präsidiums vom 17.–18. März 1964 im Bibel- und Erholungsheim in Männedorf/Zürich*, 1, DEA archives.

54 In 1965, Otto Rodenberg spoke on 'Concerning the Truth of Holy Scripture' and

published a more detailed statement on its view of Scripture. Here are some relevant excerpts from that statement:

> We note with deep concern certain trends in modern theology which gain increasing acceptance. Essential Biblical truths are questioned, and the nature of the Gospel is misrepresented through irrelevant Bible-criticism. …
>
> We accept the whole of Holy Scripture as the divine revelation inspired by the Holy Spirit, the Word of God with absolute authority determining the doctrine and the conduct of the believer.
>
> Therefore we must reject any view which regards the Bible merely as another historico-religious document, seeing in it only the testimonies of gifted men but without binding or continuing importance.[55]

At the EEA's 1967 General Assembly in Vienna, M. Derham from London represented the WEF and explained conditions for a possible merger of the WEF and EEA.[56] In late 1967, Germany and Denmark applied for WEF membership, followed by Switzerland in early 1968.[57] The minutes of the WEF Council's 1968 business meeting in Lausanne stated the following:

> Since some of these [national European EAs] have recently reaffirmed their faith in the historic creeds, and the original statement of faith of the World Evangelical Alliance, and in addition have drawn up a fresh and detailed statement of their position on the authority of scripture, … we have concluded that these are equivalent to our constitutional statement of faith for purposes of membership.
>
> We recommend therefore the ratification of this action in the case of those European Alliances which were members of the World Evangelical Alliance and not to be taken as a precedent for others.
>
> Motion prevailed that statement be ratified.[58]

In this way, an intra-evangelical conflict that had persisted for nearly twenty years was finally resolved.

Samuel Külling spoke on 'Are We to Defend "Fundamentalism"?'

55 European Evangelical Alliance, *Our Position in Relation to the Holy Scriptures*, revised draft of 1963, DEA archives. I have been unable to locate a final copy in English, but the text quoted by Howard, *The Dream That Would Not Die*, 88 is the same.

56 *Rat der Europäischen Evangelische Allianz: Ratstagung in Wien vom 19.–21. September 1967*, 2, DEA archives. Howard, *A Dream That Would Not Die*, 36 and especially note 2, is mistaken in stating that Germany and Switzerland were accepted as WEF members in 1953. This mistake is probably because Heitmüller (Germany) and Pache (Switzerland) were giving reports at the conference.

57 *Europäische Evangelische Allianz: Ratstagung vom 17.–20. September 1968 in London: Bericht des Präsidenten*, DEA archives.

58 Quoted from Howard, *The Dream That Would Not Die*, 88.