

*Movimiento internacional*  
**Somos-Iglesia**  
*Movimento Internacional*  
**Nós somos Igreja**  
*Movimento Internazionale*  
**Noi siamo Chiesa**  
*Mouvement international*  
**Nous sommes Eglise**  
*Internationale Bewegung*  
**Wir sind Kirche**

# **International Movement**

# **We are Church**

*Chair at present:*  
**Raquel Mallavibarrena**  
Penuelas 17  
28005 Madrid  
SPAIN  
Tel.: +34-649332654  
eMail: [rmallavi@mat.ucm.es](mailto:rmallavi@mat.ucm.es)

Internet: [www.we-are-church.org](http://www.we-are-church.org)

**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **“A more inclusive and compassionate Church.” What the International Movement We Are Church expects from the World Meeting of Families in Valencia**

**Please contact:**

- Raquel Mallavibarrena (Chair) (Spain)	tel. +34-649332654	<a href="mailto:rmallavi@mat.ucm.es">rmallavi@mat.ucm.es</a>
- Christian Weisner (Media) (Germany)	tel. +49-172-518 40 82	<a href="mailto:media@we-are-church.org">media@we-are-church.org</a>
- Vittorio Bellavite (Italy)	tel. +39-02-70602370	<a href="mailto:vi.bel@IOL.IT">vi.bel@IOL.IT</a>
- Valerie J Stroud (UK)	tel. +44-1634-715278	<a href="mailto:wacuk@we-are-church.org">wacuk@we-are-church.org</a>
- Rea Howarth (United States)	tel. +1-301-699-0042	<a href="mailto:cso@quixote.org">cso@quixote.org</a>
- Edith Kuropatwa-Fèvre (Belgium)	tel. +32-2-56 70 964	<a href="mailto:ekf.paves@telenet.be">ekf.paves@telenet.be</a>
- Maria João Sande Lemos (Portugal)	tel. +351.91 4602336	<a href="mailto:mjoaosl@mail.telepac.pt">mjoaosl@mail.telepac.pt</a>
- Ana Vicente (Portugal)	tel. +351 91 935 97 96	<a href="mailto:anvicente@netcabo.pt">anvicente@netcabo.pt</a>

In just a few days Benedict XVI will be in Valencia for the Fifth World Meeting of Families, an important occasion for reflection and for mobilising the Catholic world on the theme of life, relations and feelings that develop within the sphere of the family and interpersonal relationships. We feel that this is the main theme arising in pastoral matters and the evangelization of the Catholic Church at the beginning of this Millennium. In the light of this important event, we feel committed to expressing our expectations and points of view amidst our fellow believers.

We live in a society that it is no longer guided by traditional Christian values and in which new ways of living together and being families are asserting themselves. As adult and responsible citizens and Christians, we should ask for laws concerning family questions which have as starting point our free responsible decisions, always having the reference of human rights, and respecting other possibilities rather than trying to impose for all what is only valid for a group of people.

We think that, internally and socially, those concerned with the pastoral matters of the Church must have an attitude of inclusion rather than exclusion, a way of looking upon sufferers that is forever fraternal, offering words of love and compassion (Luke 6.36) before and instead of just rules and precepts based on a natural law that is put forward as being valid at all times and in all places but whose rigidity, for some time now, has been thrown into question in theological and pastoral thinking.

We are of the opinion that being faithful to the Gospel demands, above all, justice, coupled with loving in behaviour between the couple (in its different characteristics), in the education of sons and daughters, in relations with parents and in all other aspects of relationships within the

family. One cannot be silent about, undervalue, or neglect the prejudices and all other kinds of violence that occur in many parts of the world, in many and often highly sophisticated ways and even in countries regarded as more evolved, against the vulnerable: children, many women, aged and handicapped people, homosexuals, single mothers and prostitutes. Nor can we ignore the violence that also occurs within 'normal' families.

We are convinced that the priority given to the themes of the family, life and procreation in the teaching of the Church tends to push into the background the fact that love's supremacy is not expressed only in family life or personal relations, for, as Paul VI often said, charity manifests itself first and foremost through politics, intended as the search for and management of the common good. It seems to us that before all else there should be: a commitment to a more just and pacified world with no wars, no arms and no organised crime, a different relationship between the North and the South of the world and an understanding between religions over a shared universal ethic and the safeguarding of the created. These are the priorities – it seems to us – that the Gospel asks of us in our defence of life, both ours and that of future generations.

It was within the context of these general reflections that the International Movement We Are Church, in its "Appeal from the people of God" in 1995 that gathered two and a half million signatures, raised some basic questions regarding the themes of the Valencia meeting, questions over which reforms are still waiting in its own Church within the spirit of the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican. These regard allowing remarried divorcees to receive the Eucharist in the context of a personal and collective expression of faith, the recognition of the freedom of conscience in the field of reproductive health and the full acceptance of contraceptive methods as a defence against AIDS, the overcoming of all discrimination against homosexuals, the full participation of women in the ecclesiastical ministry, optional celibacy for priests and the return of those that are married to the service of the community.

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### **International Movement We Are Church**

*We Are Church is an international movement within the Roman-Catholic Church and aims at the renewal on the basis of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). We Are Church was started in Austria in 1995 with a church referendum.*

*The International Movement We Are Church, founded in Rome in 1996, is represented in more than twenty countries on all continents and is networking world-wide with similar-minded reform groups. We are Church represents theologically sound the "voice of the people in the pews", as international studies of renowned religion sociologists have confirmed again and again.*