

Movimiento internacional
Somos-Iglesia

Movimento Internazionale
Nós somos Igreja

Movimento Internazionale
Noi siamo Chiesa

Mouvement international
Nous sommes Eglise

Internationale Bewegung
Wir sind Kirche

International Movement **We are Church**

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Statement of Angelika Fromm / Germany

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We are Church calls for a 'Decade of the People of God' at the end of the 'Year for Priests'

At the end of a disappointing 'Year for Priests' and a disastrous year for the Roman Catholic Church the *International Movement We are Church* calls for a 'Decade of the People of God'.

What is the message of the Holy Ruach (Holy Spirit) at the end of this 'Year for Priests'?

The current global crisis within the church makes it clear that the clerical hierarchy alone can't serve any longer as the foundation of the Catholic church's institutional structure and authority.

The world-wide shocking disclosures of sexual abuse in the Roman Catholic Church and its concealment for decades clearly shows the scandalous aberration that can be caused by a supervalued male priesthood with forced celibacy.

Even the papal newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* printed an article by **Lucetta Scaraffia**, Professor of history, in which she **argues that the exclusion of women from church leadership is co-responsible for sexual abuse committed by men covered up by male alliances** (March 11, 2010, www.vatican.va/news_services/or/or_quo/commenti/2010/058q01b1.html).

***We are Church* appreciates the present activities of the Pope combating paedophilia in the Church.** But if Pope Benedict will say a 'Mea Culpa' for decades of child abuse by priests and cover-ups by their bishops it must be – according to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Catechism – accomplished by the willingness for compensation and the deliberate intention to do everything that is needed to prevent these crimes in future. **The 'Mea Culpa' can only be accepted by the victims as well as by the faithful if substantial structural changes are put into practice that effectively diminish the danger of sexual abuse and its concealment.**

The *International Movement We are Church* asks Pope Benedict to leave his ivory tower and to face the urgent demands of today's life. Millions of Catholic men and women all over the world have lost their trust in into the church hierarchy and have left the church. To bring these people back to our church the Pope has to approach the reforms that are so urgently needed with the same emphasis he fights now for a zero-tolerance-strategy against sexual abuse.

A vast majority of the faithful is prepared for those reforms as international studies have proved again and again (www.wir-sind-kirche.de/files/237_greely-zahlen_en.pdf). Our church urgently needs a large number male and female pastors to serve reasonably-sized parishes. **Charisma should be important, not gender. The Pope is free to introduce regulations for women and men, either married or not, who are called by the Gospel.** It is a sign of hope that among others Cardinal Schoenborn of Vienna/Austria and Archbishop Schick of Bamberg/Germany have recently questioned the rule of celibacy.

Now is the time to start reforms long overdue. Keeping the tradition alive and facing the present needs is not contradictory. The magisterium has to accept human rights and rules of democracy within our church. Equal rights for men and women are indispensable.

Therefore ***We are Church*** asks for participation of the faithful at all levels, admission of women to all offices in the church, voluntarily celibacy, and finally a humane sexual teaching that is based on the up-to-date findings of human sciences and the acceptance of the informed conscience of the individual.

According to the *Code of Canon Law Can. 212* “the Christian faithful ... have the right and even at times the duty to manifest to the sacred pastors their opinion on matters which pertain to the good of the Church and to make their opinion known to the rest of the Christian faithful”.

So many within the People of God are convinced that the Holy Ruach (Holy Spirit) has not left our Church in the deepest crisis since the Reformation but calls now for fundamental changes.

Encouraged by the Second Vatican Council which strengthened the position of the People of God within the church *We are Church* calls for a ‘Decade of the People of God’.

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The ***International Movement We are Church (IMWAC)***, founded in Rome in 1996, is committed to the renewal of the Roman Catholic Church on the basis of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and the theological spirit developed from it. *We are Church* evolved from the Church Referendum in Austria in 1995 that was started after the paedophilia scandal around Vienna's former Cardinal Groer. *We are Church* is represented in more than twenty countries on all continents and is networking world-wide with similar-minded reform groups. *We are Church* firmly supports Hans Kueng's open letter the bishops in which he urges them to push for reforms.
Homepage: www.we-are-church.org

Purple Stole Movement,

founded in 1996 in Mainz/Germany, is a section of *We are Church* that is active in promoting full equality of women in the Roman Catholic Church. At ordination ceremonies of male deacons and priests women as well as men regularly demonstrate for the renewal of ministry wearing purple stoles as their symbol. Purple is the colour of the women's movement as well as the ecclesiastic colour of repentance and new beginning.

Homepage: www.wir-sind-kirche.de/?id=197

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Angelika Fromm,

trained deacon and representative of *International Movement We are Church* and *Purple Stole Movement*, born in 1951, studied Roman Catholic theology in Muenster/Germany (1969-75) and worked as a teacher of Religious Education, German and Ethics. She has been active in *We are Church* since the very beginning in 1995 and in the Women's Ordination Movement. She finished the first training course for Women Deacons in Germany. She has three grown up children and lives in Mainz/Germany.

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