

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

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Press note - International Movement We are Church

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We are Church on the occasion of the 80th birthday of Prof. Hans Kueng on March 19, 2008

“His persistence in the renewal of the Roman Catholic Church is encouraging us”

“His persistence in the renewal of the Roman Catholic Church and his commitment to ecumenical issues as well as to the dialogue between the world religions give us equally encouragement, inspiration and incentive”, the catholic reform movement “We are Church” declares gratefully on the occasion of the 80th birthday of Prof. Hans Kueng on March 19, 2008, as Kueng is one of the intellectual fathers of the “Kirchenvolks-Begehren” (= referendum of the people of the church) 1995.

The world-famous Swiss theologian, appointed official adviser of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) by Pope John XXIII, contributed decisively to an ecumenical theology and to the inter-religious dialogue, and is still working actively and creatively for projects initiated by him, despite the following exclusion by the Roman Catholic Church.

His doctoral thesis “Justification” about the protestant theologian Karl Barth, terminated 1957, was praised by Joseph Ratzinger, colleague of Kueng at the University of Tuebingen/Germany until 1968. With his fundamental works (“The Church” 1967, “Being a Christian” 1974 and “Does God exist?” 1978), Kueng early brought certain reform topics into public, intensively justifying them biblically and spiritually in fundamental works.

With his ecumenical commitment, Kueng contributed decisively to the common declaration of the doctrine of justification, achieved by catholics and protestants in 1999. The eucharistic hospitality, supported by the Institute for ecumenical research (founded by Kueng 1963), is the right step forward according to Kueng.

More than others, Hans Kueng raised and kept alive the question of truth in Christianity. As a consequence of the Council, the encyclical on celibacy (1967), and the encyclical on birth control “Humanae vitae” (1968), Kueng raised the question if the papal ministry was infallible in his book “Infallible? An inquiry” (1970).

This resulted in the deprivation of his lectureship "missio canonis" by pope John Paul II. Dec. 18th 1979. Nevertheless Hans Kueng has not revoked his theologically well-based statements about the controversial dogma of infallibility (1870) and thus showed, that not obedience but

resistance – certainly a more seldom catholic "virtue" – is being called, when Vatican decrees must be regarded as arrogance or even usurpation.

In 1968 Hans Kueng has outlined the declaration "For the freedom in theology". His text has been revised by Yves Congar, Karl Rahner and Edward Schillebeeckx and then signed by 1.360 theologians – also by Joseph Ratzinger – from all over the world. 1989 he has been co-signer of the so-called "Cologne Declaration", which has been a votum for an open catholic attitude and against an overstretching of the pope's authority.

Hans Kueng is one of the spiritual fathers of the German "Initiative church from below", founded in 1980, and of the Austrian "Kirchenvolks-Begehren" ("church referendum") in 1995, which resulted in the international reform movement "We are Church". The second volume of his memoirs "Controversial truth" presents a historic as well as a systematic foundation of the movement's concerns and requests, which have been taking shape since the Second Vatican Council and for which he has fought already in the sixties and the seventies of the last century.

Today we must notice that Hans Kueng's questions on the papacy have not been answered at all. All these increasing conflicts between the Vatican and the local churches show this dilemma as well as the paralysing of the bishops synods. The obliged celibacy, the ordination of women and the Eucharistic problem are still being discussed – despite of the Vatican's rigid position.

In September 2005 Hans Kueng had quite a surprising meeting with Pope Benedikt XVI, his former colleague Professor Joseph Ratzinger. Not so surprisingly all subjects regarding reforms within the catholic church had been excluded. As before Hans Kueng is standing up for the wishes and demands of the International Movement We Are Church, in other words: For a renewing process of the church "bottom up".

Today Hans Kueng is very intensely engaged in the inter-religious dialogue. To this "century task" he has published three voluminous books dealing with Judaism(1991), Christianity (1995) and Islam (2004). Since 1990 he is working on the "project world ethos", supported 5 years later by the "foundation world ethos". The "declaration for the world ethos", passed 1993 by the congress of world religions in Chicago must be regarded as a milestone. It has initiated a world-wide network of inter-religious relations.

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International Movement We Are Church

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