

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

Internet: www.we-are-church.org

Press release

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***International Movement We are Church* on the opening of the Bishops' General Conference in Aparecida**

Prospects of Pope Benedict's first journey to the New World

The *International Movement We are Church* hopes that Pope Benedict, if he really wants to be a good pastor of his flock, will come with open eyes, open ears, and an open heart to Aparecida where he will open the Bishops' General Conference (CELAM) on Sunday.

His journey to Brazil - still the world's most populous Roman Catholic nation - will be **the acid test for the future of Catholicism on that continent**, the home to nearly half the world's 1.1 billion Roman Catholics. **It is also a test for the pastoral abilities of this eurocentric professor of theology. Will he humbly recognize "the signs of the times" and the "signs of the place"?**

1. In line with his first Encyclical Paper "Deus Caritas est" he could and should encourage Christians to **engage themselves in social justice and true peace**. **Latin America** is a polarized continent, deeply affected by Capitalism and Neo-liberalism which has had very negative effects on the lives of the poor.
2. He could and should merge the **question of faith and social action** as he did during his academic life with the question of faith and reason. The union between evangelisation and liberation, faith and life is already part of the tradition of the Church of Latin America and of the Caribbean.
3. In the face of the magnitude of the inequality between rich and poor people in Latin America, the Pope should and could encourage the Bishops' Conference in Aparecida to **implement the message of the important meetings of Medellín (1968) and Puebla (1979)**. He must show the way to make real the sentence of Pope John XXIII "The Church belongs to all, but especially to the poor".
4. He could and should be reconciled with **liberation theology**, now enriched with more contemporary theological dimensions (feminist, ecologist, black etc.). Liberation theology is now recognised as a main ingredient in the development of Latin American communities and movements during the last decade.

5. He could and should establish a **commission to elaborate on the historical reasons for liberation theology**. The commission could receive the name of Mgr. Oscar Arnulfo Romero, already declared a saint by the Latin American people for official recognition.
6. He could and should pay tribute to all lay men and women in the **Communities Eclesiales de Base (CEBs)** who have transmitted the Christian faith in testing times and who have kept parish communities alive despite the enormous lack of priests.
7. He could and should encourage a **new integrated spirituality** for the preservation of nature and human life, to enable the life of future generations to flourish on a continent especially affected by global change.
8. He could and should acknowledge the **diversity which exists within the Roman Catholic Church**, encouraging the men and women of Latin America to play a full role in the expression of their faith.
9. He could and should stress the importance of the **teachings of the Second Vatican Council** which favours the Church as a community of the People of God. This community should be open to ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue with its neighbours.

Please contact:

- Raquel Mallavibarrena (Chair)	(Spain)	+34-649332654	rmallavi@mat.ucm.es
- Christian Weisner (Media)	(Germany)	+49-172-518 40 82	media@we-are-church.org
- Edith Kuropatwa-Fèvre	(Belgium)	+32-2-56 70 964	ekf.paves@telenet.be
- Sefa Amell i Comas	(Catalunya/Spain)		sefa.amell@menta.net
- Movimiento También Somos Iglesia-(Chile)			somosiglesiachile@hotmail.com
- Helen McCarthy	(Ireland)		wearechurchireland@eircom.net
- Vittorio Bellavite	(Italy)	+39-02-70602370	vi.bel@IOL.IT
- Aasmund Vik	(Norway)		aasmund.vik@nationaltheatret.no
- Ana Vicente	(Portugal)	+351 91 935 97 96	anvicente@netcabo.pt
- Rea Howarth	(United States)	+1-301-699-0042	cso@quixote.org

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.