

**"I'd rather break the law of the Church than
the heart of a human"**

Dr. Thomas von Mitschke-Collande
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"I'd rather break the law of the Church than the heart of a human"

This was the pastoral motto of my late priest who often tried to defend the message of the Gospel against defamation and denunciation in his daily work. This sentence is a common theme throughout the book, with the following considerations.

The present work is a short version of the book: "Is the Catholic Church abolishing itself? – analyses and facts of a business consultant", published in September 2012 by the publishing house Kösel. It was written neither from the experience nor the perspective of a theologian, a scholar of ecclesiastical law or other Church office-holder, but from the perspective of a simple Catholic who introduces his competence and insights from his many years working as a business consultant, as well as his experiences and observations as a practicing Catholic, to his local community.

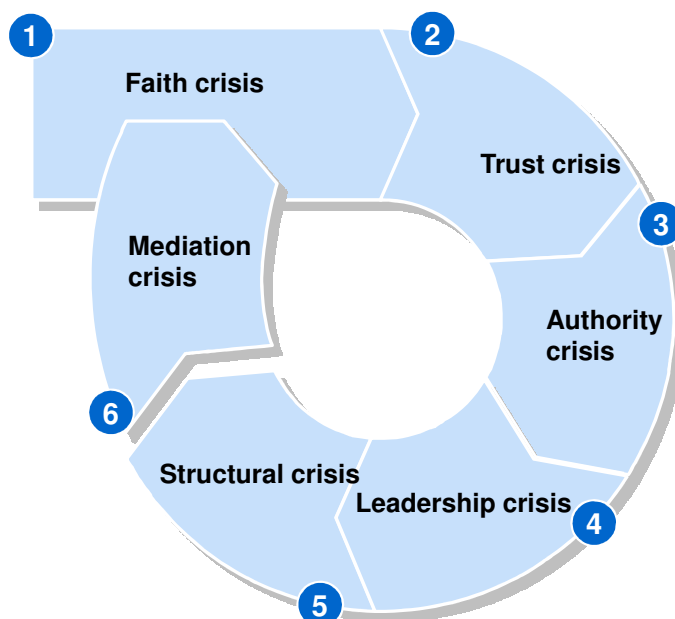
The statements do not refer to the Church as Corpus Christi mysticum, to which all baptised people belong, but solely to its real, sociological, institutional manifestation, i.e. the "visible Church". It comprehensively and systematically describes the situation of the Catholic Church in Germany using facts and demographic findings. However, many conclusions also apply to the World Church. Loss of attractiveness and social relevance is not only a German phenomenon, but also applies to large parts of the World Church.

In his foreword, Cardinal Lehmann wrote: "The reader, who also is a theologian or a scholar of ecclesiastical law, must have courage and patience, barefacedly take note of many an experience and may not prematurely resort to technical killer arguments. He must literally withstand many an overthrowing suggestion. Those who follow this path gain insights from the book."

Church in crisis

I would like to stay as concise as possible in describing the starting situation. It is sufficiently known. The crisis of the Church encompasses all dimensions in a downward spiral, starting with the crisis of faith, a crisis of trust, a crisis of authority, leadership, structure and mediation, which reinforce each other, increasingly and irrevocably bringing about the end of the traditional People's Church as it existed in recent centuries.

The Church grasps all dimensions in a downward spiral



Source: Thomas von Mitschke-Collande

A

One can agree with Pope Benedict XVI's statement that the crisis of faith is the real cause in the Western world, if for example (chart 1) only 1/3 of Germans still believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the core of our message. Only the crisis of faith and the crisis of the Church are mutually dependent on each other. A re-evangelisation, which does not trickle down into the structures of the Church and into statements of the Magisterium, will fail. The credibility of the institutions has not only suffered because of the abuse scandal and its investigation. I would just like to address three aspects.

The fundamental trust has changed to a fundamental mistrust towards the institution Catholic Church (chart 2). Only 9 percent of the non-Catholic population trust the Church, and only 34 percent of Catholics. This, in turn, means that 90 percent of the non-Catholic population and two thirds of Catholics mistrust their own Church.

A further aspect is the rapid loss of authority of the Supreme Magisterium of the Church, even among Catholics (chart 3). Only a third of them share the opinion of the Pope. For more than half, it is unimportant.

Only 4 percent of the population say that important impulses for shaping the future of our country come from the Catholic Church (chart 4). It is no longer perceived as the shaping power which changes society as the salt of the earth.

So far, four demographic snapshots.

As a consequence of many other additional factors, almost all quantitative indicators - insofar as the Church can in fact be captured in numbers - show a dramatic downward trend. Particularly lamentable is that not only marriage but also baptism rates are now significantly reduced. For example, the marriage rate fell from almost fifty to thirty percent. This means that out of ten couples, in which at least one partner is Catholic, only three get married by the Catholic Church. The only thing that is rising is the church tax, and not only absolutely but also per capita (chart 5).

Today, the Catholic Church has more than 4.3 times as many financial as well as human resources than 50 years ago. In the same period, regular church service attendance has decreased from almost 50% to 12% (**chart 6**). We do not have a financial crisis, but a drastic mediation and credibility crisis.

The Church should really be booming.

We discuss important topics, such as the reception of the sacraments for the divorced/remarried, compulsory celibacy, the role of women. These are burning issues which need to be resolved urgently. But in principle, they are internal topics and distract from the core problem. Cardinal Kasper rightly refers to them as interior furnishings. "At the same time, we are not aware that the roof of the Church is up in flames."

Pope Benedict rightly pointed out the following in his Freiburg speech: That the two large churches do not provide answers to many seekers today. We do not have a problem of demand, but largely a supply problem for people of the 21st century.

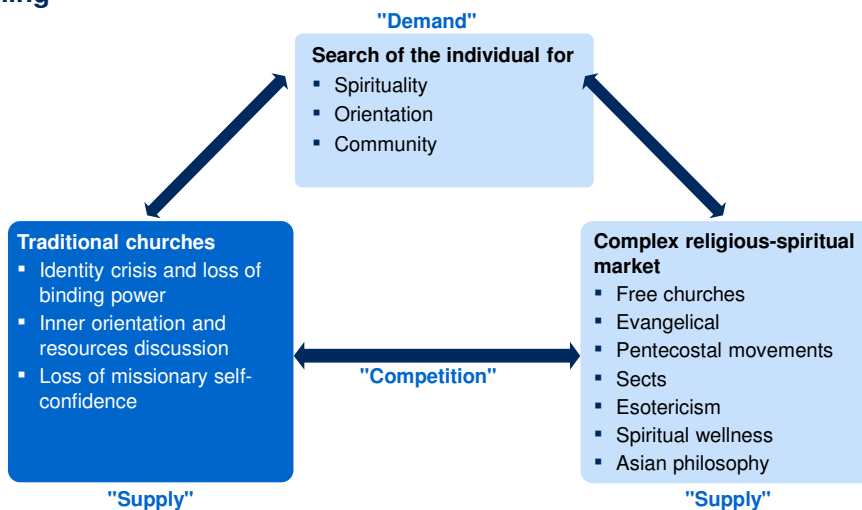
The crisis is largely self-made. The Church should really be booming.

Both statements are consciously formulated in a provocative and exaggerated manner. They are to battle resignation, defeatism, passivity and helplessness, as did John XXIII in his opening speech to the council 50 years ago.

We do not have a recognition problem, but an acceptance and action problem, a problem of refusing to accept reality and the present, a backward orientation in large parts of the official church with typical avoidance mechanisms. For example: It is man who should change fundamentally, not the Church. One laments today that man has turned away from faith and from the Church, that he is to blame for the downfall of the Church. Obviously, bearings of faith and religious attitudes have changed. These changes need to be addressed and responded to. Here and now, I must address, in their language, the people of today, the large portion of those who are remote from faith and particularly from the Church, but especially those outside the educated middle classes, I must answer their urgent questions in terms of the Gospel - as did Jesus and also the Church, during various periods of time. Many Church statements are just no longer relevant for a large part of the asking population, their current concerns, on the other hand, are not addressed at all in terms of the Gospel as a message of love and compassion.

Re-evangelisation will fail, if recipes and methods, images and statements are used which were successful yesterday - even if wrapped in a modern package, as 'youcat' has done with some success. They are unsustainable. Where, for example, are the new innovative forms of the Proclamation? The crisis of faith and the crisis of the Church are in parts mutually dependent on each other. Therefore, both must be addressed simultaneously.

Churches today are in competition with other organisations providing meaning



"... many seekers do not find contact to the established churches with their outdated structures. Why is that? ..."

Pope Benedict XVI, Freiburg 24/09/2011 speech before the ZdK

Source: Thomas von Mitschke-Collande

B

If we look at the overall situation one-dimensionally, we see that the individual is constantly searching for spirituality, seeking a mental retrospective dependence, i.e. *religio*. In addition, there is the search for orientation in a world in which traditional sets of faith and understanding no longer seem to apply. Science too is asking questions, e.g. at the beginning and the end of life, which it cannot answer. What is right, what is wrong, what is justifiable? We are the first generation plundering our blue planet, leaving it with fewer resources than it had before. We consume more than mother earth provides, destroying our grandchildren's basis of existence. What is required here is clear orientation provided by the Catholic Church: Something akin to a Catholic doctrine of creation or a Catholic doctrine of resources analogue to the Catholic social doctrine.

And finally the longing for community. The searching human individual encounters a complex religious market: from free churches via Asian organisations providing meaning to slick, spiritual "wellness offers". However, the Church in its anxiety is about to overlook this opportunity. It appears to be too preoccupied with itself, with its identity crises, with its financial and personnel problems, its fears and tensions. It has lost too much of its missionary confidence. Pope Benedict can be fully agreed with, when he laments in his Freiburg speech before the ZdK why the established churches with their outdated structures no longer connect with many seekers.

How should the Church respond to these crisis phenomena? Several options seem possible. It must withstand the temptations of resignation to leave everything as is, to only rely on God and to pray according to the assertion: The gates of hell would not prevail against it. It must also withstand the temptations of self-marginalisation to accept as inevitable the retreat into the Catholic milieu, its own shrinking, and to retreat to the circle of wagons of the small upright herd, thus relinquishing the claim to be "the salt of the earth". However, it must also withstand the temptation of self-secularisation to adapt to the spirit of the times (*Zeitgeist*), to simply become more modern and to pursue the claim of having the desire to keep the chasm between social beliefs and personal positions as small as possible. In this way, it would reduce itself to a spiritual service of general interest for each and every one, soon succumbing to arbitrariness and diluting its Catholic profile.

Despite all the criticism of the performance and appearance of the Church, there is an encouraging, varied, active Catholic communal life as well as numerous initiatives filling the Church structure on the ground with life. Catholics' Days record high attendance numbers, the pilgrimage and pilgrims' boom persists. Honorary offices in the Church enjoy high public standing and appreciation. Church work in social, charitable and educational areas is also highly respected. The following can be listed as keywords:

- Largest social network in Germany
- 6 million organised in catholic clubs/associations
- Extensive national coverage with possibility of low-threshold access during traditional "life stages" also to inactive members
- On-going high appreciation of local church activities (contrary to the institution), particularly of the social commitment (e.g. Caritas)
- Excess demand for Catholic nurseries and schools
- High mobilisation power (ca. 3 million Sunday visits, ca. 10-12 million at Christmas, 1 million on World Youth Day, 160,000 on 2nd ECC)
- Personification in the person of the Pope
- Unchanged high spiritual charisma
- Attractive brand core

As an institution, the Church has unique brand recognition and a unique offer quality. It combines the uniformity of the Catholic Church's doctrine with the diversity of traditional beliefs and local rituals around the world. It always addresses the "entire" man - in his intellectuality as well as in his emotional state or his social needs. With the Gospels, it has a constantly updated and highly attractive message, with timelessly valid contents and values which, however, always have to be reinterpreted. These strengths could indeed be successfully built upon.

A business in a comparable situation would now perform a comprehensive, open-ended position determination. The result would lead to corresponding actions. This is not the case in the Church at the moment. An institution which accepts shrinking membership numbers and gradually decreasing importance is already lost. The path that must be chosen is the model of an open missionary Church which does not withdraw from society but consciously understands itself as a part of society, and deals with the questions of man, as he is now and today, in terms of the Gospel, providing an answer even if it is uncomfortable. Much effort is needed to pursue this path. The motto is acting, not waiting and preserving, not retreating.

Ways out of the crisis

A crisis also can be a kairos, an opportune moment for a decision, for a positive development. Times of crises also hold potential for the future; they are times of purification and clarification. However, too many office holders hold on to outdated structures and think they are defending central values and faith statements.

Tradition is a process which develops dynamically

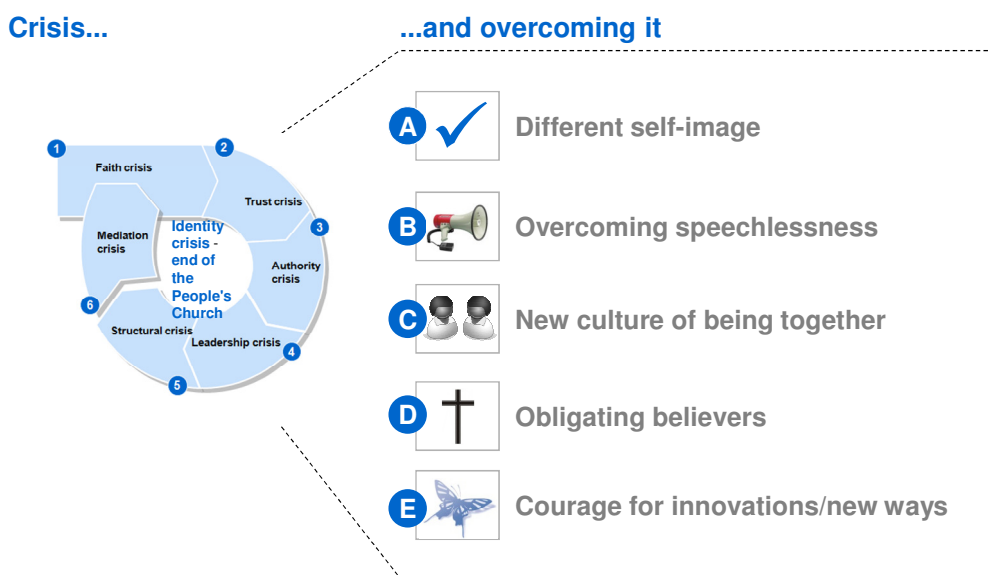
The English word tradition stems from the Latin word tradere (to take across). Tradition therefore does not mean to obsessively hold on to the conventional or to look back, but to continuously review the findings and structures of the past for their contemporaneity and to adapt them to new challenges based on the Gospel. Only in this way can an institution be made sustainable, weatherproof. The Church can only master the tradition of the Gospel into today's and tomorrow's world successfully, if it does not only operate with the structural facts and instruments of the past. It must make the step from a procrastinating Church to one that acts again. The People of God shall go on a pilgrimage. The Council Pope John XXIII summarised this by saying: "Tradition is not worshipping the ash, but passing on the fire." Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Protestant theologian, witness of the faith and martyr of the Third Reich, even accused the two Churches in 1944 of focusing on safeguarding privileges for their own sake. According to him, they revolve around themselves, weakening the proclamation. They will succeed only if they emerge from the crisis as churches characterised by the depth of their spirituality and the radicalness of their service, he said.

The Church as the pilgrimaging People of God throughout the times is the central image of the Second Vatican Council. It is time that we continue our pilgrimage. On the occasion of the appointment of a new bishop, a woman expressed this as follows: "Bishop, we started our pilgrimage. If you like, you can join us. We keep on going, one way or the other." A Church on a pilgrimage requires sense and sensitivity, not only for those close or at least in favour of it, but particularly for those searching, waiting and remote from the Church. If the official church responds to the forward movement with demonstrations of power, and to the loss of power retrospectively with decrees, it throws away an opportunity and deters especially religious, friendly, post-modern Christians and people who would be receptive.

Many activities can be seen, but even among those who want to promote the Church, a depressive perplexity is perceptible. People know something is coming to an end, or has already ended, but they don't know what's next. We need a liberating vision which marks the culture of a forward-looking, radiant and attractive Church. I honestly admit that I also don't know what this vision should look like in detail. Like everyone else, I also don't have a patent remedy for the mentioned issues. Despite this, I would like to try to list the essential elements of the vision of a sustainable, human, joyful and blooming Church.

Which direction shall we follow, without raising the claim for completeness?

5 directions for overcoming the Church crisis



Source: Thomas von Mitschke-Collande

C

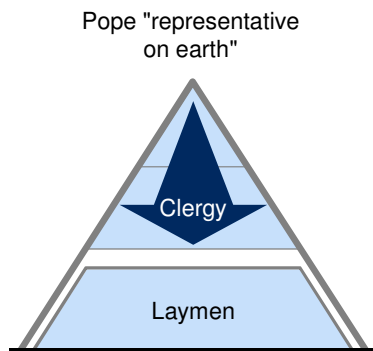
Developing a new self-image

A different self-image of the Church is required by means of a mental and spiritual renovation from within, towards a Church serving with confident humility. The traditional image of the Catholic Church is that of a pyramid. At the top the Pope as Christ's representative, then the bishops, priests and at the bottom, the laymen. It is a model of a hierarchically structured, teaching and ruling Church with clear subordination, with a division between clergy and laymen. It creates an impression of rulers and subordinates, of top and bottom and thus also optically of secularity, of larger or further proximity to God. Decisions seem to have to go from the top to the bottom.

**Paradigm change is necessary:
Putting the Church upside down mentally**

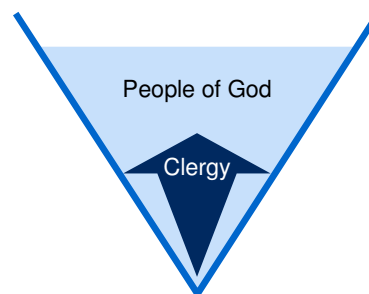


Traditional Church self-image



Warning, obedience-demanding, teaching Church

New Church image



Pope "servant of God's servants"

Serving, listening, helping, learning Church

"a church that doesn't serve, does not serve for anything"

Source: Thomas von Mitschke-Collande

D

To change this mentality, this pyramid has to be turned upside down, and not only figuratively. At the top, the People of God on their way to the end of times, carried and guided by the Pope, God's servant - another one of his titles - and by the clergy. On his shoulders rests, as with St. Christopher, the entire weight of the Church. This figurative change of paradigma would not be a draft for a Church of tomorrow, not a full acceptance of all decisions by laymen, not a full democratisation of the Church, but the optical expression of a new self-image: the image of a serving, listening, helping and learning Church. Clergy now clearly has an instrumental character. At times, images say more than words. This could be such an image. Theologically it could be argued that everything emanates from Christ and that everything is aligned towards Him. However, the upside down pyramid could also figuratively say that everything is founded in Him. That he is the root, the source, from which grows His Church. And does it not say: You are Peter, the rock *on which* and not under which *I will* build my church.

Is the growing attractiveness of the Gospel in today's time not also explained by the fact that Jesus came to serve people and not to rule and be served? Is this not the standard according to which all church actions must be measured, and not rigid canonical determinations?

The US episcopate seems to share this church image more. I quote the Archbishop Weakland from 1997: "Those European critics want a highly hierarchical model of the Church in which the believers are instructed by the bishops, who have the gift of the mind to pass on the authoritative doctrine. The US bishops believe in a model of the Church in which the Holy Spirit lives in all limbs of the Church, and they believe that the Church must listen to what the Holy Spirit says to the whole community." And the US bishops also belong to the Catholic World Church.

The Church (chart 7) must become *more Gospel-like* to be authentic. One could almost provocatively state that our constitution contains more of the spirit of the Gospel than parts of the canon law. I would like to quote Archbishop Schick on the occasion of his Palm Sunday sermon 2010: "We need less of the institution Church, but more of Jesus Christ." A renovation of the Church can only succeed via a stronger and consequent orientation towards Jesus Christ and His Gospel, as Pope Benedict rightly and repeatedly demanded. To say it in the words of the German theologian Eugen Bieser: "The Gospel is God's declaration of love to man." A reform on structures and processes and doctrines without orientation would be aimless and pointless actionism without depth and focus. However, what also applies vice-versa is that a spiritual renovation without concrete

consequences, which manifest themselves in the structures and provisions of canon law, is an unworldly spiritualism which evaporates quickly and leads to a further reform jam which will cover church life like mildew. We need both: "spiritual renovation and concrete church reforms".

Cardinals, bishops or prelates must decide, in terms of their appearance and lifestyle, whether to be some kind of prime minister or entrepreneur, or an authentic successor of the itinerant preacher from Palestine. Too often, water is preached and wine is drunk. The postulate of serving with confident humility and of apostolic unity, the radical advocacy for the poor and underprivileged of our society, is eloquently represented, but the corresponding actions frequently do not follow. Too often, the chasm between proclaimed claim and lived reality is too great.

In the Pastoral Constitution of the Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et spes*, the relinquishment of privileges is explicitly mentioned. It says, the Church is a credible successor of Jesus Christ if it was a church of the poor. It must find back to apostolic simplicity; draw its strength solely from Jesus Christ, not from wealth and political or economic power. In fact, if it stays on the path of Jesus, it will have to relinquish all feudal, grand and courtly mannerisms, not only in its appearance to the outside world but also in its mentality and style. Consequently, Paul VI gave away the tiara, the symbol of papal power, for the benefit of the poor in November 1964, i.e. at the beginning of the third year of the Vatican Council.

In the already mentioned Freiburg speech, he pointed out that a Church, freed from material and political burden and privileges, could address the world as a whole better, in a genuinely Christian manner, be really open and thus more Gospel-like. Many Christians find it difficult to combine this rightly requested apostolic simplicity with the perception of the appearance and conduct of parts of the official church, which are still largely dependent on the absolutist structures and mannerisms of the 18th century.

Those who reduce their church being to their personal relationship with God have forgotten the second - the transverse - beam of the cross. The institution of the Church must encroach upon society. A one-sided retreat to the "core business" with Eucharist and new evangelisation comes at the cost of church actions within society. Caring for the "body" and "pastoral care" are two sides of the same medal. Social commitment and liturgy may not be played off against each other. Social commitment, *caritas* and relief organisations are characteristics and columns of its credibility in society that provide identity.

It must become more **Catholic**, not more **Roman**. More general, more comprehensive, as it was successfully practised in the first millennium. This includes the acceptance of the diversity of faith manifestations and liturgy forms according to Pope Benedict's statement: There are as many ways to God as there are people. To not confuse unity with uniformity, but to promote diversity, as long as it stands on the same foundation of faith and is based on the same "depositum fidei".

Catholic means "unity in diversity". This inherent tension is the principle of life and development of the Catholic Church. The aim is to find a fair balance. Unity may not be confused with uniformity. Based on the Gospel, one has to categorically question what the real core of the Catholic Faith is, and what the truths and rules are which are really necessary for welfare. This unity must be categorically defended.

For the rest, diversity, i.e. the answers to the specific cultural and social circumstances in the various parts of the earth, shall be promoted with great serenity and faith in God. If you accept the diversity in all parts of this world as wanted by God and provide a tailored response without leaving the grounds of unity, you will succeed in meeting the various expectations. It will hereby be important to define the content of the term "unity" not expansively, but as restrictively as possible.

This requires an intensive dialogue between the different parts. Dialogue in particular means to first listen to what the Holy Spirit says to the whole Church in all parts of the world and in all its limbs - dialogue within the Church, with other confessions and religions, dialogue with the society and the modern world; and from these to form and not fearfully suppress diversity with great sovereignty, to not confuse unity with uniformity – or to quote John XXIII: "Unity only in *what is necessary*, for the rest and when in doubt, freedom, and in all, love". To be more Catholic (– diversity –), not Roman (– unity –) must be the highest maxim of action.

The current institutional guiding concept shall be questioned mercilessly with regard to how far it still meets the requirements of the World Church as a global player. Its partial failing has become too obvious in recent years and months. No overly powerful central office is needed which increasingly does not meet its own requirements

and responds to the complexity of today's World Church in a structurally overstrained manner. Its size must be drastically reduced and transformed with a kind of effective government in form of a cabinet and a "prime minister" at the top. In accordance with the subsidiarity principle, we need a radical decentralisation. Local churches and regional bishop conferences shall be strengthened significantly. They can best assess what is the right response in their specific situation and are responsible for their response. Problems and solutions are different in Europe than, for example, in Africa and Asia. A new balance shall be found for the ratio between local church and world church. We need a federal structure with a small, but effective top, accompanied by a small committee - a kind of chamber of states - with representatives of the individual parts of the world. More real collegiality and participation of the World Church. This is Catholic diversity as it is lived best, and would make Papacy more effective.

The Church is there for man, not the other way round. It must learn to deal with failures and life breaks and to practise a pastoral of compassion, which provides the opportunity for a new start and reconciliation. All church actions must be oriented towards the service for man. My late pastor used to say: "I'd rather break the law of the Church than the heart of a human."

It must therefore become *more human* – not more clerical and dogmatic – accepting today's man as he is. In his last interview, Cardinal Martini for example requested a different treatment of patchwork families, "if we don't want to lose the children of the next generation." It must speak less of prohibitions and in a less moralising manner, and more of joy, potential, happiness and positive things.

In the same discussion, Martini did not describe the receipt of the communion as a disciplinary instrument, but as a self-conscious offer of the Church in the knowledge that nothing is impossible with God.

Church is all too often not perceived as a church of compassion, but as a church of standard regulations for private life; it is therefore increasingly seen as non-binding and irrelevant and accepted by believers. It is no longer taken seriously and its commandments ignored. But this is not to mean to proclaim the word arbitrarily. Life after the Gospel also has its price and is not for free.

The theologian Eugen Bieser formulated it clearly: The Church must make efforts to leave behind a Church image that is too unilaterally moralising. Only in this way can it achieve the spiritual depth and solidary breadth of the Gospel. It must uncover again the therapeutic strength to become, in succession of Jesus the Saviour, a comprehensively healing Church for the people once again.

Overcoming speechlessness

It must overcome its speechlessness (chart 8) and address the middle of the population, which is largely uneducated in its everyday life, in its language. Understanding the social reality as it is and providing answers to mastering life here and now in terms of the Gospel, even if these answers often seem uncomfortable. To say it in the words of the theologian Eugen Bieser: "Too often, the Church is answering questions which no one raises, and questions raised by man today are often not answered." It has good, topical messages, familiar rituals and many famous faces, it is present all around the world, with the Pope at its head, but uses this inadequately as it does not speak the language of the time in many documents and statements but appears to be caught in an internal church terminology which an ordinary mortal Catholic cannot understand by any stretch of the imagination..

New culture of being together: in dialogue

It needs a new culture of being together (chart 9), in which clerics and laymen are on the same level, communicating with each other as partners with equal rights.

If it wants to use all chances and potential it has, interaction within the Church must be characterised by understanding, respect, fraternity, solidarity and love. According to Paul, "love has the last word, not an absolute truth of the one or the other side, no matter how defined" (Paul, 1st Corinthians). Especially within the Church, freedom of expression is frequently equated with the violation of the obedience principle. This is a characteristic, particularly for sects and similar organisations which regards any critical remark as treason, as fouling the nest, as a weakening of their position. For successfully led businesses, this attitude has had no validity for quite some time, and it certainly must not apply to the institution Church. Obedience without the possibility to freely express yourself runs the risk of leading to unification, to a uniformity without diversity, depth and acceptance. On the

other hand, freedom of expression also has to keep an eye on the big picture, for uniformity in diversity, and may not be offending. Discussions and disputes within the Church may not be understood as an attack, but as intervention of the Holy Spirit. For the sake of the truth, the Church must invoke the obligation of loyal contradiction. Love and obedience to Pope and Church are compatible with loyal criticism of Pope and Church, or true love actually demands loyal contradiction when seen as appropriate.

Obligating believers

It must demand the witness to the faith, the cooperation particularly of the Catholic elite (chart 10).

The future of the Church will not depend so much on the official church, on Rome and Pope, bishops and clerics, but particularly on the living, growing local communities, which are carried in particular by the apostolic testimony of laymen and committed clergymen. They decide whether the Church has a future or degenerates to a clerical sect, marginalising itself socially. Continuity, the relaunch, will come from the bottom, from the communities, from the base, from the common People of God.

At the opening of the Pastoral Conference of the diocese Rome, Pope Benedict impressively indicated a different understanding of the laymen's role as being genuinely co-responsible for the future of the Church. But the participation of the laymen must also be wanted. An increasing clericalisation, as could be observed in recent years, must be categorically opposed.

It depends on its commitment and testimony, to which extent it succeeds to keep the embers glowing and carry them into the next generation. This also means to fully activate the unused potential of the honorary office and to create the relevant preconditions. The relationship between layman and clergy must be reconsidered, and thus the priest centring. It must be realigned particularly in terms of self-image and being together. Those who want to cooperate also want to form. Charismatic, authentic burning persons are sought. We do not need a spectator church out of tradition, but a take-part church out of conviction. Don't ask what the Church has done for you, but what you have done for the Church. This also means that we, as laymen, have to rethink and depart from structural conservatism and the claim of a clerical all-inclusive provision.

Courage for innovation and new ways

The Church must be ready to go new ways, the courage for innovation - and step into unknown territory, relying, as Abraham and Moses did, on the Holy Spirit (chart 11).

Too much has been hindered by the refusal to accept reality and backward orientation. Too much has not been dealt with due to fear and a lack of trust in God. Where is the courage of a John XXIII, when he opened the windows of the Church to let the world, the modern times, enter. He didn't know what the wind would carry in, but he trusted in the Holy Spirit. This trust is missing among large parts of the clergy.

Above all, this means to see the 80 to 90% of those remote from the Church as the main focus of all activities. Today, around 80 percent of church resources are bound by the work for around 20 to 25 of Catholics. Here, a radical change of thinking and steering is required. It is necessary to address the rather uneducated lower and middle classes in their language and their media. This means to also see the tabloid press as a communication platform, if necessary. Former Erfurt bishop Wanke and auxiliary bishop Hauke lead the way with low-key pastoral concepts in Erfurt. A further approach is to fully use the possibilities and potentials of social media, the new digital and virtual world of communications. Internet appearances should not only be designed as a one-sided information platform - as is largely the case today - but consciously and purposefully as a dialogue possibility.

New ways does not only mean to rethink pastoral spaces, but to redraw the Catholic landscape with a network of spiritual centres and beacons of faith across dioceses.

Ultimately, new ways will also be necessary to learn forms of loyal church disobedience, to exercise them and to accept them as an expression of committed believers. Many clergymen already act differently today than the strict doctrine specifies, be it in liturgical execution, be it because they give the Communion to the remarried, the divorced and other Christians, or provide recommendations in their individual pastoral care which do not correspond with the official doctrine, but with the Gospel imperative and humanity. Increasingly, they disagree publicly with the diocese management; in Austria, more than 10% of the priests have joined an initiative called

'Call for disobedience'. In Germany too, there is an increasing number of similar movements. And those who say that this is only to egoistically enforce personal interests mistake the fair seriousness and do not make a far enough leap. Individual layman organisations and layman representatives take a public stand in increasing numbers against their local church management, although here too, a consideration for dependencies cannot be overlooked.

But forms of disobedience increasingly include the simple, unorganised believers, be it in form of church occupations or in form of public campaigns. 'When will Catholics finally take to the streets?' was the bold headline in a German newspaper. The majority expressed displeasure with the proposals of the bishop. In February 2012, more than 30,000 Catholics embraced in the diocese Augsburg 150 churches to express that the church should stay in the town. More than a thousand Catholics came to a rally on the cathedral square to express their solidarity. By the way: the bishop had the cathedral locked during the rally, also a sign of clear symbolic power.

Behind all the mentioned protests are people who have the future of the Church at heart, who do no longer stay quiet and suffer for the sake of their children, but do not shun the public, the communal resistance to move something, relying on the power of the prayer, the power of trusting and the power of the Holy Spirit. As we know, many a saint has started out as an outsider, a rebel and heretic.

Outlook

But does anything change?

Do we not experience a retreat from society, a backward-oriented holding-on to the traditional and a rigid, dogmatic canon law which results in the risk of imploding, a splitting and reform in consensus on the basis of a Third Vatican Council? Do those responsible read the signs of the time and draw the right conclusions? If this had been done at the end of the 15th century and overdue reforms to eliminate obvious grievances had been initiated; the Church and humanity could have been spared not only a painful division of the Church, but also lots of suffering and misery.

There is a lot of steam in the boiler.

But don't we also experience a pre-reform atmosphere in Germany, in the German Church? Bones of contention, powerful communication instruments, furious, disappointed Catholics who increasingly transform from furious Catholics to courageous Catholics wanting to change something - all of this is present in abundance. The base is becoming more confident, laymen as well as clergymen. We have more and more problem-conscious cardinals (chart 12) and bishops, we have the potential of the new media. What may still be missing is the initial spark, a charismatic person such as a Francis of Assisi or a Martin Luther. But maybe none of this is necessary if, surprisingly, the Holy Spirit would again fill the Throne of Peter with an amiable revolutionary such as John XXIII. And who would summon a Third Vatican Council in reliance upon the Holy Spirit to make the visible Church sustainable for the 21st century.

Annex

- Contents of the book
- Excerpts from the foreword by Cardinal Karl Lehmann
- Vita of the author

CONTENTS

Foreword by Cardinal Karl Lehmann

I. The end of the People's Church

The end of the People's Church
The "abuse tsunami"
The end of a successful "business model"

II. The Church in crisis

1. The faith crisis

Proven but expiring models of faith transfer
To believe is no longer "in"

2. The trust crisis

Credibility is a matter of survival
Alarming distrust in the institution Church
Reasons for the trust crisis
Always leading by example?
All a "question of money"
Dealing with sexuality
On the road to new trust

3. The authority crisis

The Church is affected above all
Rampant loss of authority
A glance at the population
The power of argument, instead of the argument of power

4. The leadership crisis

The critical element: the bishop
Promising leadership principles
The bishop and "his" priests
The ground personnel – the priests
Young clericalism

5. The structural crisis

The pastoral of fusion
The structure of the Church in Germany
Outdated organisation principles
"The crisis in construction"
Church finances are still abundant

6. The mediation crisis

Decrease in member numbers and church service visits
Solidarity with the Church
Member development and leaving the Church
Significantly less than 20 million Catholics to be expected

What future awaits the Church?

III. Less refusal to accept reality and less self-deception, more crisis awareness and willingness to change are indicated

"Crisis, what crisis?"

Many escape routes which are just too comfortable

Temptations of self-marginalisation and self-secularisation

IV. The Church should really be booming

Religiousness – a *condition bumaine*

The crisis of the affluent society

One can build on strengths

V. Ways out of the crisis

Tradition is a process which develops dynamically.

1. Developing a new self-image

Turning the Hierarchy upside down

Becoming more Gospel-like

Becoming more Catholic, not more Roman

Becoming more human

2. Overcoming speechlessness

Media as partners, not enemies

Speaking the language of man

Using new media

3. New culture of being together: in dialogue

Reflecting discussion is undesired

How dialogue can succeed

Constructive criticism is necessary

4. Obligating believers

The apostolic confession of the laymen

Honorary commitment of the laymen

Wanted participation

Women in the Church

Youths in the Church

A question of the future

5. More courage for innovation and new ways

What decelerates or prevents innovation?

Mysticism and *burning persons*

Those remote from the Church as main target group

Approaching the people of today

The chances of larger pastoral spaces

Developing the Catholic map

>>It's impossible that we stay silent<< (Apg 4.20)

Learning loyal disobedience

VI. Outlook

Foreword (shortened)

As McKinsey Director, Dr. Thomas von Mitschke-Collande has been a consultant for the Secretary of the German Bishop Conference and for various German dioceses, including the bishopric of Mainz.

.....

In the concentrated book you will find dense summaries of analyses and survey results. Due to his professional experience, however, the author is prevented from flatly taking over such factual atmospheric pictures. He can differentiate well by also seeking and observing the horizontal checksum of such experiences. Don't be fooled: Not everything the author writes is his opinion as well.

.....

But it is exactly in the intensification of some findings, which are a source of irritation for some, where also lies an understandable strategy: Because findings, especially those that displease or even hurt, are often covered again and ignored. The author therefore accepts black-and-white pictures on occasion in order to develop selective alternatives. This applies for example to the circle-of-wagons mentality versus the advocacy for a missionary church as a basic option of the future path.

However, don't be fooled by the language and perspective of the business consultant. Thomas von Mitschke-Collande is not familiar with the area of the Church solely from professional contacts, but his image of the Church is earthed in many regards: He lives with his family in a concrete community and helps out there. It is not only an expert talking here, but someone who actually comes from the grass roots. He therefore quickly sees through false solutions which lead into dead ends. When he describes crises, he suffers personally, therefore seeking feasible ways out. For this reason, he also addresses painful issues of the current Church: the strong decrease in church service visitors, the fifty percent decrease in baptisms and marriages, the loss in trust of the Church caused by the abuse scandal, that was covered up for too long, the helplessness in dealing with sexuality, the low sensitivity for questions regarding the position of women in the Church, and the incapability of dealing with human failures and life breaks. The author knows the seductive attitudes of how to deal with these violations, e.g. refusal to accept reality, self-pity and self-deception, which however can lead to real diseases if we do not fight them. Many suggestions which the author formulates as a business consultant boost many an already discussed advice in the current situation. This applies for example to a new culture of coexistence of laymen and office-holders. The reader, who is also a theologian, must have courage and patience in order to take note of many an experience in a bare-faced manner. He must literally withstand many an overthrowing suggestion and may not prematurely resort to technical killer arguments. It is necessary to disagree on some statements. But the author wants to deeply and genuinely understand the situation of the Church. Those who want to join this path, gain insights with the book, even if some findings are highly arguable. The book is not short of exaggerations, which start with the title "Is the Church abolishing itself?" and also appear in the context of high-tension expectations: "The Church should really be booming". Anyway, it can help us to really find our footing in the current situation of the Church, to not be soothed by trends from right or left, but to incessantly seek and find orientation.

.....

I therefore hope that this jolting book will find many attentive readers.

Mainz, June 2012

Karl Cardinal Lehmann

Vita

Dr. Thomas von Mitschke-Collande, born in 1950, is Emeritus Director of the business consultancy McKinsey in Munich and lives in Tutzing. In recent years, the committed Catholic has provided consultation to several dioceses and the German Bishop Conference. He has deep insights into the Catholic Church and is part of a wide network in church, politics and society.

He is a member of the foundation board of the Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingoldstadt and elected member of the Central Committee of Catholics in Germany.

Surveys show the extent of the loss in faith substance

Catholics in percent

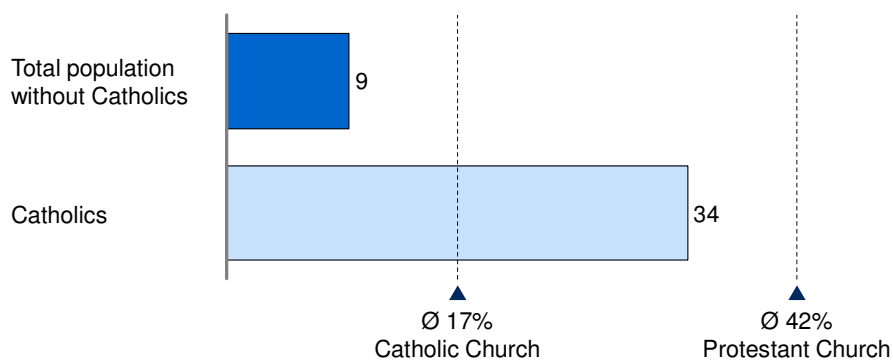
Believe	Total	Age groups in years	
		16 - 29	≥ 60
▪ In God	83	68	94
▪ That God created the world	55	39	68
▪ In the triune God of the Christians - Father, Son and Holy Spirit	54	44	65
▪ In life after death	52	46	60
▪ In the resurrection of the dead – as Christ was resurrected	36	29	44

Source: Allensbacher Archiv; IfD-Umfrage 7032, October 2002, also see Spiegel 2007

1

Dramatic deterioration of trust, especially in non-Catholic population

Trust in Catholic Church



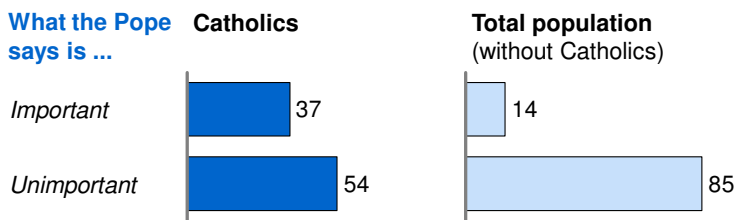
Source: Forsa March 2011

2

For more than half of Catholics, the opinion of the Supreme Magisterium is unimportant

Authority of the Pope (before 2011 Germany visit)

in percent



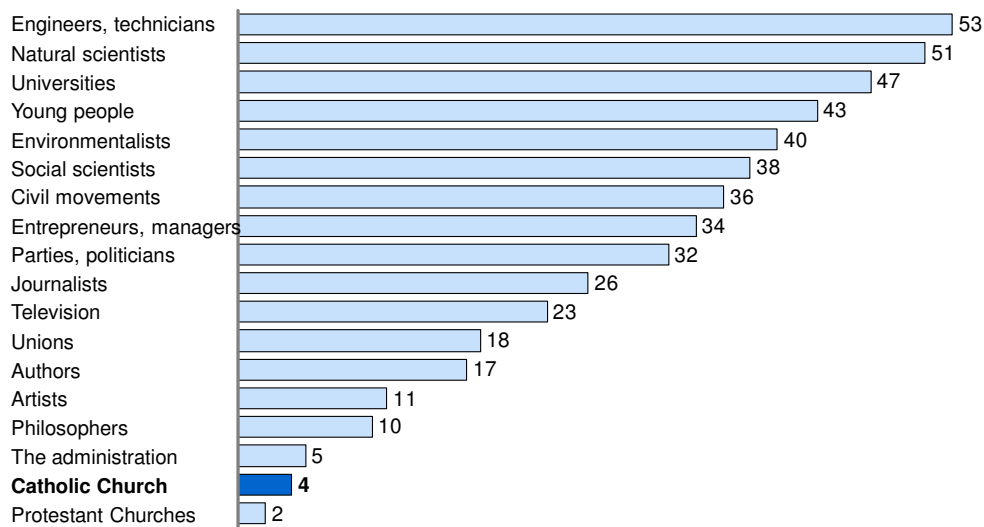
Source: Survey Bertelsmann Stiftung, August 2011

3

It is no longer perceived as the shaping power of society

"Who provides the most important impulses for shaping our future today, who has the best ideas and concepts?"

in percent of participants

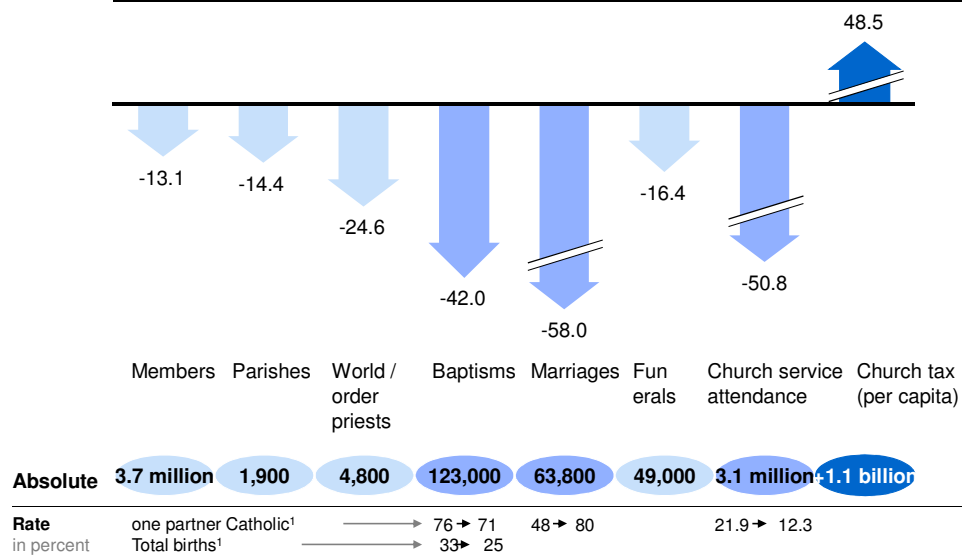


Source: Allensbacher Archiv, IFD-Umfrage Nr. 10071

4

Dramatic downward trend of almost all major indicators

Changes 1990 - 2011
in percent



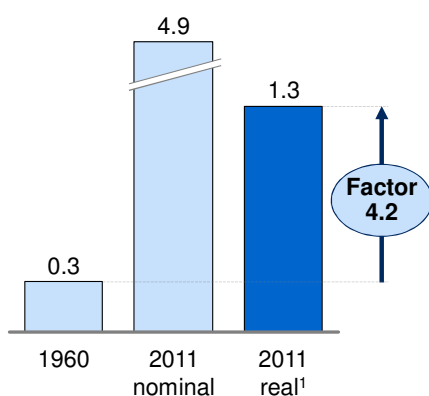
1 2010

Source: Deutsche Bischofskonferenz 2012

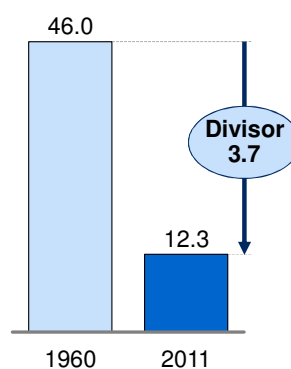
5

Despite growing resources in long-term comparison, the message no longer arrives

Catholic Church tax (net)
in billions EUR



Regular church attendance
in percent



Employees

0.2 million

1.3 million

"Regressive mediation capability of the churches"²

1 In prices of 1960

2 Zollitsch, 20/2/2011 in WamS

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, Deutsche Bischofskonferenz

6

Different self-image – mental and spiritual renovation from within



Vision: serving and learning Church

"More Gospel-like"

"We need less of the institution Church, but more of Jesus Christ"

(Archbishop Schick, Palm Sunday 2010)

"More Catholic" not "more Roman"

"More human" not "more dogmatic" and "more clerical"

"The path of Church is man"

(John Paul II)

"I'd rather break a law of the church than the heart of a human."

(local priest)

7

Professional Communication



Overcoming speechlessness!

- **Speaking the language** of the time
- Consciously **recognising the middle and lower population classes** as medial main group and addressing them in their everyday life
- No shyness from **responsible simplification**
- **Becoming campaign-capable** – finding topical subjects, planning, occupying, persevering (e.g. radical fight against climatic change, waste of resources)
- Understanding and embracing the laws **of the media world**, Media not opponent, but partner
- Media work **from one cast** by reducing structural deficits
- Using "new media" professionally and actively

Source: Archbishop Weakland, 1997

8

Establishment of a new culture of co-existence



Discussion and controversy on the same level within the official church as well as with laymen and science

- **Understanding dispute not as attack**, but as **acts** of the **Holy Spirit** in the struggle for truth (constructive culture of dispute and discussion), "first apostolic council"
- **Being integrative** and not discriminating, **open and fearless, mutual respect**, respecting the opinion of others, **becoming capable of dialogue**
- **Same level:** The word of the layman is as important as that of the bishop
- **Not questioning** truth of faith necessary for welfare (depositum fidei), **but** structures and processes
- Commitment to "**constructive contradiction**", learning forms of **loyal disobedience**

"It requires the fair debate with people who are burning so that the Spirit can drift"

Cardinal Martini, August 2012

9

The believers decide whether the Church has a future



- The Church is the **entire People of God (Vat. II)**
- Obligating believers, **particularly** elites
- **Developing commitment** to honorary offices
- **Wanting/strengthening the laymen**
- Recognising the potential of **women as equals**
- **Focussing on young** people, conveying an attractive offer of meaning

"Don't ask what the Church has done for you, but: what have you done for the Church?"

10

More courage for innovation and new ways



-
- **Mysticism, spirituality**
 - **Burning Persons**, charismas
 - Going towards **people**, close to man
 - **Those remote from the Church** as main target group
 - Chances of larger **pastoral spaces**, pastoral of **charismas**, creative pastoral
 - Community as a **network of faith biotopes** (small cells/groups)
 - **New forms of** proclamation (radicalism/provocation)
 - **Milieu opening**
-



11

Blueprint or review?

Last interview of Cardinal Martini, August 2012



"**Tired, rich Church, far removed from man**"

"where there are people **risking something new**, like Paul"

"Pope and bishops must **turn back ... and chose radical ways to change** ... e.g. in all topics concerning the body"

"Vaticanum II gave Catholics the Bible in the hand ... can **Catholics** deal **confidently with that** ... clergy and canon law cannot replace inwardness"

"Sacraments, not instruments of **disciplining ...but support** in the **weaknesses** of life"

"Dealing with patchwork families determines the **generation of the children**"

"**Confident offer** of the Church in the knowledge **that nothing is impossible with God**"

"Why does it not move, are we afraid? **Fear instead of courage?**"

"Only love **will overcome the tiredness of the Church**", "God is love"

