



Kirchen VolksBewegung

Reform Movement 'We Are Church', Germany

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We Are Church

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Information about the recent work of the Catholic reform movement „We are Church“ since February 2006:

Successful participation at “Katholikentag” (German Catholic meeting) in Saarbrücken

“Justice in the Church” was the focal point of the catholic reform movement “We Are Church” when participating at the 96th “Katholikentag” in Saarbrücken. This nationwide meeting of lay Catholics is arranged every two to four years by the “ZdK” (Zentralkomitee der deutschen Katholiken, i.e. Central Committee of German Catholics) in cooperation with the respective local bishop.

With three self-organized events, the catholic reform movement “We Are Church” focussed on freedom in the church (Prof. Dr. Gotthold Hasenhüttl had to stay in the audience, since he was not allowed to take part in the panel), the future development of pastoral in parishes (among others with the professor of pastoral theology, Dr. Paul Michael Zulehner, and a Swiss female parish leader), and ecumenical issues. Our central information point on the church mile – with many prominent guests at our “talks at Jacob’s well” – was very well frequented during all three days.

Besides the official programme of the “Katholikentag”, “We Are Church”, together with other reform groups, organized the forum “Not only concerning Communion: the scandal of separation” with Prof. Dr. Gotthold Hasenhüttl and the protestant journalism professor Johanna Haberer.

Accompanying critically the Pope’s visit in Bavaria

Being a constructively critical voice that can’t be ignored, the catholic reform movement “We Are Church” showed up again at the occasion of the second visit of German Pope Benedict XVI to Germany (September 9 to 14, 2006).

■ “KirchenVolksBriefe” for Pope Benedict – Bishops and Nuntius asked for handover

A choice of “KirchenVolksBriefe” (letters of the people of the church) filled with questions, requests, wishes and prayers for the Pope, organised by “We Are Church” at the occasion of the Pope’s visit, was sent to the bishops of the dioceses the Pope visited and the German Nuntius, asking them to hand the letters over to the Pope. Even Radio Vatican reported about these letters.

■ “Public Letter” to the Bishop of Rome and the German bishops

This public letter contains an unvarnished presentation of the current situation of the Roman-Catholic church in Germany, made up in ten topics. The letter calls on the Catholic people to show more courage in Christian hope, and asks the Pope and the bishops to seek the open and sincere dialogue with the people of the church.

■ fact sheets: “Catholic church in Germany at turning point”

The public letter and the “KirchenVolksBriefe” were completed by press reports before and during the Pope’s visit and by so-called fact sheets focussing on the current situation of the church in Germany.

Our international website contains nearly all texts concerning the Pope’s visit – in English, Spanish, French, Italian and Portuguese. ⇒ www.wir-sind-kirche.de/index.php?id=145

The great echo in the media for “We Are Church” during the Pope’s visit (in the press, radio and TV) is documented in the internet. ⇒ www.wir-sind-kirche.de/index.php?id=125&id_entry=367

Call for constructive dialogue with bishops before “ad limina”-visits

“We Are Church” has urged the German bishops at the occasion of their plenary assembly in September 2006 to enter into the “constructive dialogue about the current questions and problems in the church” recommended by the Apostolic Nuntiaty. This dialogue should be begun before the German bishops go to Rome for their “ad limina”-visits (November 6 to 18). This is because during the Pope’s visit to Bavaria, the concrete pastoral problems – not only concerning Germany – have not been mentioned.

Rome calls for dialogue with bishops *The international Catholic reform movement “We Are Church” having asked repeatedly for a dialogue with Rome – and the first letter to Pope Benedict XVI after his election not having been replied –, the Vatican Secretary of State notified through the Apostolic Nuntiaty “that your request can unfortunately not be met” (letter of August 23, 2006). The letter, however, says also: “At any time, you and the other members are encouraged to enter into a constructive dialogue with the bishops and priests of your dioceses on current questions and problems in the church.”*



Reform Movement 'We Are Church', Germany (continued)

Churchtax – Church secession – Church membership

We Are Church published on its homepage on 27th May a Vatican paper concerning Church Secession and Church membership, addressed to all Bishops' Conferences worldwide. The paper confirms *We Are Church's* position in which leaving the Church under constitutional law must not automatically lead to excommunication. The text's publication initiated a lively discussion among canonists, generally confirming our position. The German Bishops' Conference, however, continues to insist on the current German practice.

⇒ www.wir-sind-kirche.de/index.php?id=128&id_entry=266

New publications

Two books have been published just in time for the Frankfurt book fair, in which the *We Are Church* Movement has participated in a special way:

Bibel in gerechter Sprache (The Bible in a language of justice), Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2400 pages, ISBN 3-579-05500-3, 24,95 EUR (The German *We Are Church* movement has helped to fund the translation of the book Judith.)

Gotthold Hasenhüttl: Ökumenische Gastfreundschaft – Ein Tabu wird gebrochen (Ecumenical hospitality – a taboo is now broken), Kreuz-Verlag, 100 Seiten, ISBN 3-7831-2819-6, 12,95 EUR (the book deals with the ecumenical services on the back of the 1st Ecumenical Meeting 2003 in Berlin)

Renewal of *We Are Church's* Internet Presence

The re-organised and renewed internet presence of the German *We Are Church* Movement has gone online just in time for the German Catholic Meeting. The address remains the same: ⇒ www.wir-sind-kirche.de

Further Activities of the German *We Are Church* Movement since February 2006 (selection)

- 19. National Assembly „Christ has freed us to freedom“, 24th-26th March 2006 in Trier
- Church Service for the „World Prayer Day for the Ordination of Women“, 26th March in front of the Cathedral of Trier
- Spiritual recreation days for young people and families at the beginning of August
- 20. National Assembly „Community – the unfulfilled vision“, 27th - 29th October 2006 in Augsburg, among others with the pastoral theologian Prof. Dr. Hanspeter Heinz and the Swiss parishleader Elke Kreiselmeier.
- Events in Berlin and elsewhere with Prof. DDr. Gotthold Hasenhüttl concerning ecumenical hospitality.
- Demand on the Bishop of Trier, Dr. Reinhard Marx, to revoke the suspension from priesthood and the withdrawal of the teaching permit of Prof. Gotthold Hasenhüttl
- Protest against the rejection by the Vatican congregation of the klerus of the complaint by Prof. Dr. Johannes Grabmeier against the reform of parish councils in the diocese of Regensburg.
- Protest against the Vatican's attempt to question the resolutions of the synod of Würzburg (1972-75)
- Statement: Archbishop Caffarra's appointment as Cardinal is significant offence
- Statement: No solution in sight for central questions one year after the change in popes
- Statement: Official decision for Second Ecumenical Meeting 2010 in Munich welcomed

Ongoing Offers of the German *We Are Church* Movement

- Six information centres for women in pregnancy conflict through *Frauenwürde* ⇒ www-frauenwuerde.de
- „Zypresse-Emergency-Telephone“ for children and youth affected by sexual violence through priests and members of orders

International Work of the German *We Are Church* Movement

- Participation in the Conference of the European Network Church on the Move, 28th April to 1st May 2006 in Wiesbaden-Naurod
- Preparation (content and organisation) of the **IMWAC-Council, 16th to 18th June 2006 in Freising** near Munich. During this Council, Christian Weisner has handed the chair(wo)manship, which had been with Germany for the past 18 months, to Raquel Mallavibarrena (Somos Iglesia, Spain).

Preview 2007 of the German *We Are Church* Movement

15 th - 18 th February	Accompanying the 3rd European Ecumenical Assembly in Lutherstadt Wittenberg
23 th - 25 th March	21st National Assembly in Dresden
29 th April	Call to “ ChurchPeopleSermon ” as sermons by lay people
6 th - 10 th June	Participation in the German Protestant Meeting in Cologne
July or August	Spiritual Recreation Days 2007
26 th - 28 th October	22nd National Assembly in Schwarzach near Würzburg

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