



# Kirchen VolksBewegung

Reform Movement 'We Are Church', Germany

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*We Are Church*

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About recent projects of We are Church Germany since Autumn 2007:

## 22nd National Convention of *We Are Church* Germany under the topic "Living in Freedom"

**Dr. Erwin Koller**, Swiss theologian, journalist and vice president of the Herbert Haag-foundation "For freedom within the Church" gave the main lecture "Living in freedom – liberation from forced justification" on the 22<sup>nd</sup> public national convention in Muensterschwarzach near Wuerzburg, October 26-28, 2007.

### New *We are Church* Team elected

At this national convention the following persons have been elected into the national steering committee of *We Are Church* Germany for the next two years (in the photo from left to right): **Sigrid Grabmeier**, **Christian Weisner**, **Doris Ahlers** (new), **Herbert Tyroller** (new), **Dietgard Heine** and **Georg Kohl** (new).



## Unscheduled change in chairmanship of the German Bishops' Conference

*We are Church* deeply regretted that Cardinal Karl Lehmann had to leave his post as chairman of the German Bishops' Conference "for health reasons" after more than two decades on February 18, 2008. Some issues of *We are Church* concerning lay people, remarried divorced people and ecumenism are also his issues. It can be assumed that the growing divergence inside the bishops' conference, but especially the controversy with Rome about pregnancy advisory service and about ecumenism with the churches of reformation have heavily affected his health.

### Archbishop Dr. Robert Zollitsch to be Cardinal Lehmann's successor

*We are Church* acknowledged the election of the archbishop of Freiburg as Cardinal Lehmann's successor as a good sign. Zollitsch argued for the further development of ecumenism, for example, which is very important for the preparation of the second Ecumenical Church Convention in Munich in 2010.

*We are Church* has addressed personal congratulations to the newly elected chairman and is hoping for a constructive dialogue as the *International Movement We are Church* was assured at the disposition of the Vatican's Secretary of State in 2006.

### Increasing polarization inside the German Bishops' Conference

The new chairman has earned a lot of encouragement from the people in the pews, but has also met opposition within the Bishops' Conference because of his differentiated but clear declaration about celibacy as "theologically not necessary". *We are Church* regrets the now appearing sharp polarization inside the Bishops' Conference and hopes that the bishops and auxiliary bishops who voted for Zollitsch will express solidarity with him. The new chairman has the support of the people in the pews, at least.

Against general expectations Dr. Reinhard Marx, until now bishop in Treves (conflict with Prof. Gotthold Hasenhuettl at the Ecumenical Church Convention in Berlin in 2003 because of eucharistic hospitality) and now archbishop of Munich and Freising since February 2, 2008, had not received the majority of the 70 German bishops and auxiliary bishops.

## New Nuncio has been asked for „constructive dialogue“ in Germany

Archbishop Jean-Claude Périsset, new German Apostolic Nuncio since November 20, 2007 has answered the letter in which *We are Church* had asked him to hold a "constructive dialogue". This had been promised to *We are Church* in 2006 by the Apostolic Nunciature at the disposition of the Vatican's Secretary of State. There is no fixed date for a dialogue yet.

## Problematic call of the bishop of Regensburg, Dr. Mueller, into the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

*We are Church* has judged the call of the professor of dogmatics and bishop of Regensburg Dr. Mueller into the Roman Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith as most problematical as long as his responsibility concerning the sexual abuse in his diocese has not been cleared. The call, carried out by the pope at the end of 2007, is an affront against all efforts to keep a straight line in all cases of sexual abuse.



### Further activities of *We are Church* Germany since spring 2007 (a selection)

- supporting action for the Dutch Dominicans, who addressed the problem of celibacy openly in their brochure “Church and and the Ministry”
- letter to the Bavarian Prime Minister Guenther Beckstein before he met Pope Benedict in October 2007
- supporting plea to the newly elected parish counselors in six German dioceses in November 2007
- Solemn vigil on bishop Dr. Mueller's fifth anniversary on November 24, 2007 in Regensburg
- Munich based letter campaign “The new bishop should know what the people in the pews think!” on the occasion of the inauguration of the former bishop of Treves Dr. Reinhard Marx as new Archbishop of Munich and Freising
- Action due to the second anniversary of the Encyclical “Deus Caritas Est”
- organizing the lecture tour of Opus Dei expert Peter Hertel in order to present his new book „*Schleichende Uebernahme. Das Opus Dei unter Papst Benedikt XVI.*“ (“Secret Takeover. Opus Dei under Pope Benedict XVI”)
- PowerPoint Presentation „What is the message of the Second Vatican Council today?“
- numerous further activities of the diocesan and project teams

### Important statements of *We are Church* Germany

- on the nominations of bishops for Limburg, Speyer as well as Munich and Freising
- on the “Doctrinal Note on Some Aspects of Evangelization” of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith of December 3, 2007, published in Rome on December 14, 2007
- on the second Encyclical “*Spe Salvi*” of Pope Benedict by Prof. Dr. Norbert Scholl
- *We are Church* annual balance 2007: (“No year of hope in spite of the ‘Hope Encyclical’”)
- on the centenary of the octave of prayer and the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the week of prayer for unity of Christians in January 2008
- on the international congress of the “Papal Council for the Laity” in Rome, February 7-9, 2008 on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the apostolic letter ‘*Mulieris Dignitatem*’ from August 15, 1988

### Permanent services offered by *We Are Church* Germany

- Six counseling offices for women thinking about abortion by Frauenwuerde e.V. (Dignity of Women)  
→ [www.frauenwuerde.de](http://www.frauenwuerde.de)
- “Cypress-emergency-telephone”, a helpline for children and teenagers abused by priests or members of religious orders.

### International work of *We are Church* Germany

- Attendance of the 18th conference of the *European Network „Church on the Move* “ and of the 11th annual meeting of the *International Movement We are Church*, May 1-4, 2008 in Strasbourg/France
- Participating in the coordination team of the *International Movement We are Church* (IMWAC)

### Preview of the work of *We are Church* Germany in 2008

March 28-30, 2008	<b>23<sup>th</sup> National Convention on the topic: Sexuality</b> in Bielefeld. Furthermore: Lecture „Jesus of Nazareth – liberation through peace“ by <b>Dr. Eugen Drewermann</b>
March 30, 2008	Church service on the occasion of the “ <b>Worldwide Day of Prayer for the Ordination of Women</b> ” in front of the cathedral of Paderborn
April 13, 2008	Appeal for <b>lay sermons</b> (“KirchenVolksPredigt”)
Mai 24-25, 2008	Participating in the <b>97<sup>th</sup> German Catholic Convention</b> („Katholikentag”) in Osnabrück
August 2-5, 2008	<b>Days of spiritual encounter</b> at Rothenfels Castle („Burg Rothenfels”)
September 19-21, 2008	<i>We are Church</i> <b>Study Day on “Liturgy“</b>
October, 5-26, 2008	planned: critical <b>attendance of the Synod of Bishops in Rome</b>
November 7-9, 2008	<b>24<sup>th</sup> National Convention</b> in Wuerzburg

Donations in Germany: *Wir sind Kirche* Foerdereverein e.V. Account 18 222 000 Darlehnskasse Muenster e.G. (BLZ 400 602 65)  
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