



# Kirchen VolksBewegung

Reform Movement 'We Are Church', Germany

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We Are Church

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News update: Current work since spring 2007:

## 12 Years „We Are Church Germany“ - 12 Years „Voice of the People in the Pews“

12 years after the church referendum in 1995 (its goals and demands were signed by more than 2,5 million women and men in German-speaking countries) WE ARE CHURCH Germany and recognized theologians became the „voice of the people in the pews“. Other ecclesiastical associations remain silent more and more considering the restaurative atmosphere in our church. That's why the „voice of the people in the pews“ became even more important. The election of the German Joseph Ratzinger as pope means a special challenge and responsibility for the German movement WE ARE CHURCH.

The German reform movement WE ARE CHURCH got the **Cultural Award 2007 of the International St. Paul's Community (IPG)** on the 29th of June 2007 recognizing their many different statements, projects and activities for the reformation of the catholic church and its essential contribution to humanize our society.

### Encouraging response at the Protestant Church Convention 2007 in Cologne



We are church was part of the „ecumenical village“ at the 31st Protestant Church Convention ( 6-10 June, 2007) in Cologne with its motto „Catholics for ecumenism!“. Once more WE ARE CHURCH encouraged everybody at the convention to put hospitality into practice by joining the catholic Eucharist and the protestant Communion. Even the Vatican Radio quoted parts of our press release on this subject. Members of WE ARE CHURCH took part at the demonstration during the convention which was called „Kirche Gib 8“ (Church look out!) on the occasion of the G-8 summit being held in Heiligendamm/Germany at the same time.

### A much considered quiet demonstration during the Bishops Conference in front of Fulda's Cathedral

WE ARE CHURCH together with MARIA VON MAGDALA (a feminists' movement in the church) did a quiet demonstration called „We are denouncing“ at the opening of the autumn general meeting of the Bishops Conference on the 24th of September 2007 in Fulda.

Reminding boards were impressively nailed on three posts and they were demonstrating: the list of unsolved problems in our church is getting longer and longer. But the results of this general meeting of the Bishops Conference were disappointing especially the ones about the reform of the pastoral care in the dioceses as well as the future strategy in case of sexual abuse in the church.



### Scandalous handling of sexual abuse in the diocese of Regensburg (bishop Müller)

The irresponsible handling of yet another case of sexual abuse by a clergyman in the diocese of Regensburg threw a shadow on the entire conference of the German bishops. It was not the first incident of this kind. In a previous case, too, the regulations issued by the German Bishops' Conference for cases of sexual abuse of juvenile persons by clerics had been neglected. But part of the responsibility must also be fixed on the Vatican, because through the motu proprio dated April 2001 the Congregation of Faith has taken over the church-law judicature of cases of sexual abuse.

Therefore, with a **catalogue of precise questions and demands**, which was sent to the bishop of Regensburg, the German Bishops' Conference, pope Benedict XVI and the Vatican authorities involved, We are Church Germany requested from the Bishops' Conference to keep to the regulations issued by them 5 years before and to re-examine and, if necessary, to adjust them. In addition, We are Church renewed its demand for independent counselling institutions. As long as this demand is not complied with, We are Church maintains its so called „Cy-press“ emergency- telephone, which was set up in 2002 as an opportunity for quick contact.

### Further activities of We Are Church Germany since spring 2007 (selected):

- Protest against the Vatican's notification of **F. Jon Sobrino SJ**
- Support of the demand of several theologians including Prof. Hünermann for a **reform of the Congregation of Faith**
- Ratification of a **petition** of WOW (Women's Ordination Worldwide) **for the restoration of the diaconate for women**
- Broad **discussion of celibacy** after the ordination into Catholic priesthood of a married protestant clergyman in the diocese of Eichstaett/Germany
- **Public call to take part in the selection of a bishop** for the diocese of Speyer, with statements of church-law experts and an exchange of letters with the nuncio.
- **21st General Assembly** of We are Church Germany, March 23 -25, 2007 in Dresden on the issue „Encounter with God outside the church doors – non-believers as sisters and brothers”
- **Days of spiritual encounter** for people with and without children at Burg Rothenfels in August 2007
- **22nd General Assembly**, October 26-28, 2007 in Muensterschwarzach near Wuerzburg with the theme „Living freedom” with Dr. Erwin Koller, vice-president of the Herbert-Haag-Foundation for Freedom in the Church
- Numerous other activities by the diocesan groups and the working-groups

### Important statements of the German Reform Movement 'We Are Church'

- „For a reconciled Europe with religious diversity” at the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome on March 25, 2007
- „No solutions to pivotal questions to be seen in the nearest future” at the 80th birthday und the 2nd anniversary of the election of Pope Benedict
- Seven theses „Against the resignation in ecumenical efforts” prior to the German protestant Convention in Cologne
- „The Second Vatican Council may and must not be called into question!” – statement on Motu Proprio „Summorum Pontificum“ of July 7, 2007
- Statement on the letter by the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith concerning the doctrine of the Church of July 10, 2007
- Open Letter to the churches of Reformation after the declaration by the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith of July 10, 2007
- „Churches themselves must be a role model for renewal and unity” at the 3rd European Ecumenical Assembly (September 4-8, 2007) in Sibiu/ Hermannstadt/Romania

### Permanent offers of the German Reform Movement 'We Are Church'

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

### International assignments of the German Reform Movement 'We Are Church'

- Attendance at the **17th Conference of the European network „Church on the move”** and the **10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Movement 'We Are Church'** May 3-6, 2007 in Lisbon/ Portugal
- Participating in the newly created **coordination team of IMWAC**
- Attendance at the **Meeting in the Diocese of Basel** „Human rights within and outside Church” May 17-19, 2007
- Attendance at the **award ceremony of the Herbert Haag Foundation** for freedom in Church at June 24, 2007
- Participating in the **Women's Synod of Switzerland** at September 22, 2007
- Participating in the **We are Church-Conference** and the *plenary meeting platform We Are Church* at October 2007 in Vienna/Austria

### Fact sheets in German, English, Spanish, French and Italian

- IMWAC's information package on the current situation of the Roman-Catholic Church in Germany and the special relation between the Church in Germany and the Vatican (where Joseph Ratzinger has been Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith for more than 23 years.) → [www.wir-sind-kirche.de](http://www.wir-sind-kirche.de), keyword „international (top right)

### Outlook for the 2008's dates of the German Reform Movement 'We Are Church'

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|--------------------|---|
| March 28-30, 2008  | <b>23<sup>rd</sup> National Convention</b> in Bielefeld regarding sexuality                             |
| March 30, 2008     | <b>Service to the World Day of Prayer for Women's Ordination</b> in front of the Cathedral of Paderborn |
| April 13, 2008     | Appeal for <b>lay sermons</b> („KirchenVolksPredigt”)   |
| May 21-25, 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”)                             |
| October 5-26, 2008 | <b>critical attendance of the Synod of Bishops in Rome</b>  |
| Fall 2008          | <b>24<sup>th</sup> National Convention</b>  |

**Donations: *Wir sind Kirche* Förderverein e.V. Konto 18 222 000 Darlehnskasse Münster e.G. (BLZ 400 602 65)**

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