

## **VEOK's Nyhedsmail nr. 23**

### **27-jun-05**

Fra IMWAC - International Movement We Are Church - har vi modtaget pressemeddelelse i anledning af bevægelsens 10 års jubilæum:

#### **We are Church” Celebrates its 10th Anniversary Renewing its Worldwide Commitment to the Reform of the Roman Catholic Church**

Fra IMWAC - International Movement We Are Church - har vi modtaget dette brev til de canadiske biskopper:

#### **Letter to our Bishops and All the Faithful**

Fra Marti Williams har vi modtaget følgende kommentar til pavevalget:

#### **Ratzinger dækkede over sexskandalerne - Glemmer katolikker virkelig så hurtigt?**

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#### **We are Church” Celebrates its 10th Anniversary Renewing its Worldwide Commitment to the Reform of the Roman Catholic Church**

(Innsbruck, Austria / Hanover, Germany)

More than 100 delegates and guests from 9 countries celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Church Referendum (Kirchenvolks-Begehren) on June 24 to 26 in Innsbruck/Austria where this now world-wide movement for reform in the Roman-Catholic Church began in 1995. At that weekend the movement renewed its commitment to reform and exchanged inspiring plans for their future work.

As a reform movement within the Roman-Catholic Church “We are Church” is writing a letter to Pope Benedict XVI asking for dialogue.

Always ready to give a voice to the person in the pews, “We are Church-YOUTH” will set up a WorldYouthDay4All during the Catholic WorldYouthDay in Germany August 11-21, 2005.

“We are Church“ will also be present in Rome responding to the Eucharistic Synod from October 2 to 23, 2005, considering that Jesus Christ established the Eucharist as the sign of universal love.

The debates held all over the world at the time of the death of John Paul II. and of the election of Benedict XVI. by the Cardinals, a very small number of Church members, have shown that the majority of the People of God wants an inclusive Church, a prophetic Church.

In a message of greeting the famous theologian Hans Kueng wrote: “The election of the new Pope has not changed the problematic situation in the Catholic Church substantially. The needs are still the same, but we must not bury our hopes. The renewal of the Church from the base has to go on and will go on. I will do my part, every man and every woman should do their part.”

“We are Church” evolved from the Church Referendum in Austria in 1995 that was started after the scandal of the sexual abuse around Vienna’s Cardinal Groer. “We are Church” is now represented in more than twenty countries on all continents and is networking world-wide with similar-minded reform groups. As international studies of renowned religion sociologists confirm, the reforms proposed by “We are Church” reflect the majority of the people in the pews.

Until the next Council of the International Movement “We are Church” in the spring of 2006 “We are Church” Germany will continue to hold the chair.

Christian Weisner

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## **Letter to our Bishops and All the Faithful**

The decline of Catholicism suggests that the only way to deal with the needs of the Church's mission should be a change of mentality at every level of the ecclesiastical system. Such a radical change should take place through decentralization and by a fresh engagement with today's world.

We the undersigned wish to provide the opportunity for all members of the people of God to reflect on the hopes for the Church's future. With this in mind, we want to sketch out the essential elements of a style of Church whose structures, mentality and functioning would be, in our opinion, better adapted to our times.

### **1) A decentralized Church: all roads no longer lead to Rome**

A great many Catholics are discouraged at seeing their Church, "the instrument of salvation", silencing any challenges and reaffirming moral, doctrinal and disciplinary issues of unequal importance and often out-dated, yet closed to the evolution of knowledge and of societies, as it was in former times when it could impose its ideas on the world. It thus turns away many men and women from its rich spiritual heritage, which they consider obscure and out of date.

The Roman Curia, which has become a centralizing agency, has applied the brakes to the prophetic advances of Vatican II in the matter of collegiality, in pastoral initiatives and in ecumenism. The heavy Roman hand on the entire life of the Catholic community presents an obstacle to the renewal of the institution and to improved relations with our modern life.

### **2) A truly universal Church**

To be considered universal the Church should be ready to engage cultures and not the inverse. It should enquire and learn how to recognize their riches in a constructive dialogue. In spite of the work of its missionaries and the presence of local clergy the predominance of the Latin Church remains an obstacle to the full flowering of other traditions which express, in their own way, the "treasure of the faith", in theology, pastoral and liturgical activity, architecture, sacramental rituals and the spiritual life. To communicate the Good News to all the cultures to whom it is destined, the Church should, while listening to the Spirit, engage in its apostolic mission without imposing a particular cultural model.

### **3) A Church which is a partner of the people rather than the ruling-class**

The Church should gather together the people of God without distinction. Vestiges of an imperial past, the arsenal of a diplomatic corps and a network of apostolic nunciatures goes against the original style lived by Christ and his apostles. The Church should count on the work of individuals, affirming, as Jesus did, its independence towards the State and giving up the false security which often results from ambiguous dealings with the ruling-class. It is important that the pope and the bishops maintain their freedom and refuse every privilege, distinction and dealing which would run the risk of entering into political or financial activities that violate human rights.

The Church should make its voice heard but not substitute it for the voice of the people or individuals. Its mission is no longer to conquer the masses but to promote non-violent liberation, against every form of exclusivity, by transforming the hearts of individual persons. It should also reconsider its presence in world organizations. It is no longer a secular power, and people no longer want it to take positions which touch on the autonomy of individual consciences, but to remind them of personal Christian values.

#### **4) A Church that supports participation and joint decision-making**

Rather than relying on authoritarianism and atrophy, it should fill positions within the Church by democratic procedures. The choice of a new pope should no longer depend on a college of cardinals chosen for their conformity to a certain model. Representatives of all the people of God should take part in nominations: bishops, priests and lay people as well as religious congregations. In the choosing of bishops it is necessary to adopt a procedure that involves the full participation of the faithful.

To be chosen pope, cardinal or bishop should be seen not as an honour or a reward, or as a function conferring supernatural authority over and above one's baptism, but rather as a commitment and a service whose duration should be limited, for the good of the Church.

To be faithful to Christ, the ecclesiastical institution should depend on the faith and initiative of its members, not on blind obedience to a central control system which defends its absolute power. It should rely on the action of the Spirit, encourage discussion of matters that deal with faith and conscience and take into account the consensus that results. Rome would thus be taking a collegial direction reflecting the expectations of believers and their freedom of speech.

#### **5) A Church which fully recognizes the rights of women to equality**

The refusal to give women the same rights as men in the Church, and their exclusion from the priesthood rest, in our opinion, on arguments with no justification - juridical, theological, or even Christian. To exclude anyone is to go against the will of Christ. To believe that priestly ministry is reserved for only men is to fall under the old law which Jesus came to perfect, and to perpetuate the sexual exclusivity of the time of St. Paul, which has been presented as being of divine inspiration, as have the traditions developed in the course of history according to which women were treated as inferiors. In doing so, the Church has acted contrary to the Gospel and the mission of Christ, which transcend customs and cultures. Men and women are called to follow the same ideals of the Gospel, and are both encouraged to be its spokespersons.

#### **6) A Church which learns from the failure of its interference in sexual matters**

It is incumbent upon Christians as individuals and as couples, assisted by their pastors, to resolve moral questions that relate to their sexual lives. Only Jesus is our saviour, who plumbs the depths of the loins and the heart. He does not hesitate to forgive sins. He chose his disciples from ordinary people, not from doctors of the Law. No one can condemn in His name.

Sadly, the fixation of Rome on contraception has affected the lives of millions of couples. Its rigid stance on divorce, abortion, pre-marital relations, homosexuality, and the remarriage of divorced people have increased the culpability of the Church and discredited it as a Church without compassion, although it claims to possess the truth. In short, it is not the Church's role to impose its rules on married couples, nor to dictate policy to nation states. The sexual scandals which have rocked the Catholic world should make the Church reflect on the wisdom of its rules.

#### **7) A Church which no longer deprives the faithful of the celebration of the Eucharist**

Many Catholic communities in America and Europe will soon not have enough priests to celebrate the Eucharist. Rather than changing its rules for the priesthood by ordaining married men or by allowing priests to marry, Rome turns a blind eye to the problem, and thus thwarts the will of God. But originally celibacy was imposed only on monks. In the West, it was extended to all priests, while in the East it was demanded only of bishops. In January 2004 John Paul II reaffirmed that it was an essential element of the priesthood; so the people of God need patience.

## **8) A Church anxious to establish and encourage ecumenical and interreligious dialogue**

Since Vatican II the Catholic Church has engaged in dialogue with other Christian Churches in order to resolve by discussion historical disputes and arguments over leadership that were connected with doctrinal and disciplinary issues. Genuine Christian witness demands the reuniting of the whole Christian family. Unfortunately, fear of diversity is rampant in Rome.

Nevertheless, John Paul II freed the Church's relations with Judaism from the prejudices of the past, and meetings with other religions in Assisi remain a sign of hope. This is a beginning.

### **Conclusion**

At a time when the Church is undergoing a change in leadership, we hope it will show to the world another side of itself. That it will be less centred on the role and image of the papacy. That, not content simply to ask forgiveness from those it has persecuted, it will hear the criticism and interventions from its own members, and will show itself open to dialogue.

That it will be a Church of communion, led by the Gospel rather than directed by canon law or a curia of which Jesus would be the first to challenge its exclusivity. A Church of participation, founded on the charisms poured out on believers by the Spirit, solicitous of theological vitality and openness to the world, and receptive to cultural and spiritual diversity.

A Church attentive to the signs of the time. A flexible Church, respectful of the "sensus fidelium", representative of local people and Churches. A Church one and universal, but with structures that allow for collegial decisions and decentralized services.

(April 15, 2005)

### **GROUP SIGNATORIES:**

Le Réseau Culture et Foi  
Association des religieuses pour la promotion des femmes  
Centre St-Pierre  
Groupe du Manifeste d'Ottawa  
Collective L'Autre Parole  
Communauté chrétienne Notre-Dame-de-Grâce  
Communauté chrétienne Ste-Brigide

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## **Ratzinger dækkede over sexskandalerne - Glemmer katolikker virkelig så hurtigt?** af Marti Williams

Som troende, praktiserende katolik, fik jeg mine første alvorlige bange anelser for den katolske kirkes fremtid, da jeg så hvorledes Johannes Poul IIs begravelse blev til en Hollywood produktion med "a cast of thousands".

Begivenheden fik mig til at tænke på filmene "Ben Hur", og "Cleopatra". Hvor pinligt og usmageligt, tænkte jeg. Jesus ville have foretrukket noget mere beskedent. Jeg krummede tæer i skoene i flovhed.

Bedre blev det ikke da vi i TV avisen kunne følge hvor mondænt kardinalerne skulle bo under pavevalget. De stakler! de skulle bo på Hostel Santa Marta. For jer der ikke så TV, så er Hostel Santa Marta ikke ligefrem Risskov Vandrehjem. Ikke at der er noget galt med Risskov Vandrehjem. Tværtimod. Men ærlig talt, jeg tror at Jesus ville have foretrukket vandrehjemmet. For øvrigt ville han nok være blevet forment adgang til Hostel Santa Marta..

Min værste frygt blev bekræftet, da de velnærede og udvilede herrer valgte Joseph Ratzinger til pave. Hvorfor?

Ser man bort fra hans reaktionære holdninger, så var det for at både vi og kardinalerne skulle glemme, at det var Ratzinger som dækkede over disse kvalmende sexskandaler og som der fortsat dækkes over.

Det er vigtigt at huske, at pavens magt og indflydelse er enorm, og at den på verdensplan rækker ud til milliarder af katolikker samtidig med at hans magt også griber ind i verdenspolitikken, dette pavevalg er altså derfor af største vigtighed for alle ikke kun for katolikker.

På den højt respekteret TV kanal fra USA som hedder "60 Minutes", kunne man den 25/05/05 følge en undersøgelse af mordet på en ministrant dreng. En sex-ring i Springfield, som omfattede præster og diakoner i Massachusetts har destrueret dokumenter om misbrug, sandelig modige handlinger!.

I vinteren 2002, havde Father James Scahill hørte fhv. Biskop Thomas L. Dupre sige, at Bostonkirkeskandalen aldrig ville kunne finde sted i Springfield. Det var heldigt, for inden han gik på pension, destruerede Biskop Christopher J. Weldon mange sager med personlige oplysninger om de ansatte. Ydermere har Father James Scahill som den eneste i landet af samvittighedsgrunde tilbageholdt 6 procent af sit sogns obligatorisk økonomisk bidrag til bispedømmet. Man kan læse om det på [www.BishopAccountability.org](http://www.BishopAccountability.org). Det er sandelig smertefuldt og kvalmende læsning.

I "National Catholic Reporter" (<http://nationalcatholicreporter.org/update/bn052505.htm>) skriver John L. Allen, korrespondent ved Vatikanet den 25-05-05 at Fr. Marcial Macel, grundlægger af den stærkt reaktionære katolske sekt Legionaries of Christ, slipper for en kanonisk retsag for hans sex-misbrug med ofre i Mexico City og New York., stærkt hjulpet af sin gode ven, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, udenrigsminister for Vatikan Staten.

Den 25-05-05 skrev Vatikanets korrespondent at en katolsk menneskerettigheds gruppe har krævet at den italienske politi fører retsag imod paven efter at myndighederne i Rom i ugen før sprængte en ring som havde gjort sig skyldig i massivt børnmisbrug denne

implicerende blandt andet katolske præster. Catholics Against Child Abuse (CACA) kræver nu at politiet arresterer Pave Benedict XVI og anklager ham for at være medskyldig i misbrug af børn og for at obstruere retsagen ved at dække over præsters misbrug af børn. (se: [www.catholicsforchoice.org](http://www.catholicsforchoice.org) )

Det er skræmmende og chokerende at være katolik. Hvad ville der være sket hvis en anden pave var blevet valgt? Sikkert det samme!

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Hvis du ikke ønsker at modtage disse mails fremover, så giv os venligst besked.  
Adressen står nederst på dette brev.

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Orientering fra formand og bestyrelse vil fortsat blive sendt i nyhedsbreve,  
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