

## KÜNG REMARKS AT AWARD DINNER

**D**r. Küng was asked to discuss his relationship and recent meeting with the former Cardinal Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI. Küng and Ratzinger have known each other for over 40 years, since slightly before they were both *periti* to the German bishops at the Second Vatican Council. Vatican II obviously was a defining event for both men.

In 1966, Küng, as Dean of the Faculty of Theology, invited Ratzinger to teach at the University of Tübingen, which he did for three years. In 1968, however, Tübingen experienced student rebellions which scandalized and upset Ratzinger. Even now, Benedict XVI still remembers the Tübingen student revolts as "very difficult" with interruptions of classes and meetings. Küng had been in the US and seen the student revolts there but Ratzinger had not, and so he was only too glad to move to the University of Regensburg where conditions were quiet and orderly. Küng is convinced it was this experience that was the most crucial factor in changing Ratzinger from the relatively liberal theologian of Vatican II to the increasingly conservative cardinal we have come to know. Thus, Ratzinger was profoundly shocked by Küng's book on Infallibility. Being more comfortable in the post-Reformation paradigm and somewhat shy to boot, Ratzinger the bishop, for example, preferred to write to his priests than have face-to-face meetings. Compared to the rigidly dogmatic John Paul II, however, Benedict XVI is a model of openness.



Robert Schutzius and Hans Küng at the reception. Photograph by I. Shafer.

Küng and Benedict XVI spent four hours together at Castel Gandolfo in late September, 2005. Küng prefers not to reveal what they discussed in any detail, although some elements of their conversations can be found in "From Disillusion to Hope" which is included in this issue of *ARCC Light* as an insert. Dr. Küng did say that they did not discuss the topics on which they know they disagree, and that the general atmosphere was pleasant and relaxed throughout. It is a measure of the trust between the two men that Küng suggested that Benedict XVI write the joint statement they would issue about their meeting and he had virtually no changes to make to the Pope's eminently fair text.

Küng wishes to continue these discussions and he feels it is important to give Benedict XVI a chance. It is also important to keep up the pressure for reform. Bishops, priests, and lay people like the members of ARCC must continue to make known the wishes of the People of God. One of the most



Board Member Patrick Collins and ARCC Treasurer Sonya Quitslund at the award dinner. Photograph by I. Shafer.

important reforms needed is the election of bishops, and according to Küng, Pope Ratzinger could make changes that a liberal Pope could not, which makes it all the more important to keep up the pressure for reform. In short, Hans Küng seems cautiously hopeful.

Christine M. Roussel

## PRESIDENTIAL REFLECTIONS: PARISH CONSTITUTION MOVEMENT BEGINNING TO MOVE

**L**ast October on the Feast of the Holy Family, as a result of my lecturing in Japan (organized by our "ARCC Secret Weapon" Filo Hirota), Holy Family Catholic parish in Kurosaki on the southern island of Kyushu, Japan, created and used their own liturgy for the formal installation of their Parish Constitution. It now hangs inside the entrance of the church. A second Catholic parish in a suburb of Tokyo has, also as a result of my lecturing there, embarked on the process of creating a Parish Constitution.

"Meanwhile back at the ranch," in the wake of the devastating Philadelphia grand jury's report on the clergy sexual abuse, Father Dominic Chiaravalle, pastor of Old St. Mary's parish in the historic Independence Hall/Liberty Bell section of the city, has announced for this Lent a "We the People... We the Church" five part lecture series on "Democracy in the Church and Parish Constitutions," with the aim of stirring up the energy to create a Parish Constitution. The texts of the five lectures, and the best of the ensuing discussions, will be made available for others to do the same - as soon as I have finished writing them!

Leonard Swidler

## WHAT IS HAPPENING ON THE BOARD?

**T**he ARCC board of directors met shortly after the very successful Hans Küng event in Philadelphia in November. We welcomed two new board members: Fr. Patrick Collins, a well-known liturgist, retreat-master and author, and Jack, who prefers to remain anonymous in the catacombs for the present. We are grateful for their willingness to serve on our working board. Mary Louise Hartman announced her resignation after more than 20 years of service, many of which were as President of the board. Mary Lou is recovering from

family losses, and decided it was time to act on her firm conviction that there should be term limits for board membership. We will miss her greatly, but we are very glad she has agreed to continue to represent ARCC on the Culture of Conversation board.

Having presented the first ARCC Rights of Catholics in the Church Award to Hans himself, the board developed the procedure for giving this award in coming years, which was published in the November-December issue of *ARCC Light*. Our Treasurer, Sonya Quitslund, presented a somewhat more favorable financial report than we have seen in recent years. Board members reported on their advocacy work: Len Swidler and Fr. Tom Doyle reported on their participation in the CTA Conference, Sr. Caridad Inda spoke about our proposed collaboration with Proconsul (a Spanish group seeking a Vatican III ecumenical council). Len Swidler also reported on his collaboration with Sr. Chris Schenk, president of FutureChurch, in developing a training program to prepare elected lay members of a parish to minister to the community when a priest is no longer available to do so. The process will also include how to establish an independent 501(c)(3) parish account and develop, install, and implement a Parish Constitution.

Ingrid Shafer, who has been functioning as Vice President of ARCC after the resignation of Bob Hart, was formally elected Vice President. ARCC's distinguished presence on the web, both in its web sites and e-mail lists, is also Ingrid's work. Chris Roussel (with Ingrid responsible for layout and design) has taken over as editor of our newsletter, *ARCC Light*, from Doug McFerran who did a great job.

Our gratitude to those who have come, served well, and gone on to other things needs to be expressed, especially to Gene Bianchi, Sidney Callahan, Patrick Connor, Terry Doshi, Bob Hart, Bob Kaiser, Dan Ward, and, of course, Mary Lou Hartman, along with our former national coordinator, John Sheehan. Your contributions remain with us.

Did I mention that the ARCC board is a working board? Much of this work can be found at <http://arccsites.org>. If you have any questions please ask.

Bob Schutzius, Secretary  
ARCC  
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#### To All ARCC Members:

**If you are not receiving email from ARCC, especially ARCC Spots on the 1st and 15th of each month, and other special announcements, please send a message to [rschutz1@prodigy.net](mailto:rschutz1@prodigy.net). You are missing really interesting messages. And it's free, another benefit of your ARCC membership.**

**THANK YOU!**

### PAUL COLLINS, *GOD'S NEW MAN: THE ELECTION OF BENEDICT XVI AND THE LEGACY OF JOHN PAUL II* (CONTINUUM, LONDON, NEW YORK 2005, 233 PP)

Review by Patrick Connor, SVD



his book is a must read for ARCC members—indeed, for anyone interested in the legacy Pope John Paul has left the church, and in the papacy of Benedict XVI. The author is an Australian journalist and historian and veteran Vatican-watcher. One of the advantages of Collins' style is that he writes with admirable clarity about what are fairly recondite issues in theology—like the then Cardinal Ratzinger's clashes with the purveyors of liberation theology. Even the "simple faithful" of Ratzinger's imagination will be able to follow the intricacies of the debate.

Probably the best way to review the book (which I read in one day, postponing all other recreations) is to follow the outline PC has chosen. He first writes of the legacy of JP II. This would include his favorable attitude toward the NRMs—the new religious movements, like the Neo-Catechumenate, and the Legionaires of Christ. These groups, and others like them, cause division wherever they operate, especially at the parish level. But they had easy access to the Pope. He, for his part, embraced and embodied an absolutist and monarchical model of the papacy, which left no room for collegiality. The Pope's "peripateticism" reinforced the idea that the Pope was the church and the world's bishops merely his empurpled flunkies. (Collins is in favor of the conciliarist approach to church governance, but he doesn't want another Council soon, because so many of the [JP II appointed] bishops in the world are incompetent nonentities and so would make a hash of a Council.) That blithe spirit, Andrew Greeley, is saltier. He writes that the Vatican has "largely appointed as bishops in the US mean-spirited careerists, inept, incompetent, insensitive bureaucrats."

One of historian Collins' most telling criticisms of JP II is:

...[S]o much of his teaching seemed ... divorced from reality. He showed little acquaintance with contemporary theology and especially with thinkers such as Karl Rahner. He lacked any real understanding of contemporary biblical studies and church history. [He did not understand] the historical conditioning that contextualizes all philosophy and theology ...[or] the extraordinary historical mutation through which Catholicism has been passing since John XXIII.... Ratzinger ... shared the same kind of historical amnesia.... (pp 100-101)

Charmingly, Collins spoofs his own predictions about what qualities JP II's successor should have—e.g., "curia cardinals are unlikely to be elected." Nor will anyone "with outspoken opinions." He will need to "have worked in parishes..." Which makes the reader leery of Collins' predictions of what the papacy of Benedict will be like, viz: because of the Pope's age, his will not be a long papacy; it will be a more modest papacy, without the circus-like atmosphere that sometimes surrounded his predecessor; dissenters will have a hard time; it will be a missionary papacy; the pope will be more prepared to listen

than was JP II, who listened to no one; there will be fewer canonizations; and there will be a better celebration of the liturgy. Collins finds it encouraging that the pope loves the music of Beethoven and Mozart—but then, so did some of the leading Nazis in Hitler's Germany.

A couple of footnotes: Karl Rahner was a German, not an Austrian; Collins sometimes lapses into the Australian argot, not necessarily understood *in partibus infidelium* - e.g., nous, get up, wouldn't touch with a barge-pole, onside, put the boot in.

In this review I have not done anything near justice to a book that is rich in anecdote, in historical allusions, and in theological sophistication—and, withal, hypnotically readable.

Patrick Connor, SVD

## THE PUBLIC VOICE OF THE MAGISTERIUM



Who "speaks" for the Magisterium? Without going into the vexing, difficult question of what constitutes the Magisterium, who tells the world what the Pope or the heads of Vatican congregations, say, do or teach? Putting aside for a moment the more fully-developed discussions found in encyclicals and other official documents, where do most Catholics get their day-to-day information on the position and opinion of the Vatican, the Pope, on the multitude of questions facing Catholics and all Christians today?

Whether Catholics realize it or not, their sources of Vatican/Papal information are rather limited and almost completely dominated by one ultra-conservative segment of the Church.

Many Catholics, both lay and clerical, have as their primary source of "official" information from Rome a news service called *Zenit*, which is owned and produced in six languages by the Legionaries of Christ and sent electronically to about 300,000 recipients daily. Some stories in each issue relate specifically to the countries or cultures in which they will be read. Newspaper services and bishops' conferences also receive and read their linguistic *Zenit* carefully and reproduce or adapt its stories widely. *Zenit* is supposedly intended primarily for individual readers.

The Holy See's official purveyor of news for news services such as AP, UPI, Reuters, and national services such as the American Catholic News Service put out by the NCCB, is the Vatican Information Service, also known as the *Salla Stampa*, run by Joaquin Navarro-Valls and Opus Dei. The VIS produces all of the Vatican's official statements, press releases, and communiques in several languages, in print in Rome and electronically throughout the world.

Opus Dei and the Legionaries of Christ, with its lay arm, Regnum Christi, are extremely wealthy, extremely conservative groups much favored by the late Pope John Paul II. They are the two most successful of what are called the new ecclesial movements. Opus Dei is a personal prelature, a canonical category created especially for it, with its own bishop-head

answerable only to the Pope. The Legionaries, founded by Marcial Maciel, recently honored by Pope John Paul II, have had their yearly crop of new priests ordained by the Pope himself in Saint Peter's Basilica for over twenty years. Only advanced Parkinson's disease forced the late Pope to relinquish that mark of favor.

These, then, are the groups that speak for the Pope and the Vatican departments and supply much of the news that is filtered to and through secular wire services and national Catholic news services to Catholics all over the world.

The other great print organ of the Vatican is, of course, *L'Osservatore Romano*. *L'Osservatore Romano* is published in several editions and is under the control of the Jesuits, as it has been for several decades, despite the attempts of Opus Dei and the Legionaries to wrest control from them.



Lest one assume this means that breaths of liberal ideas flow through *L'Osservatore Romano*, one should recall that the Jesuits are a large and varied order and the wing of the Jesuits in favor with Rome at the moment include Father Gumpel, relator for the cause for beatification of Pius XII, and Father Fessio, a protégé of Cardinal, now Pope, Ratzinger, whose Ignatius Press publishes Ratzinger's works in the United States, as well as *Catholic World News* and *Catholic World Report*, which call themselves independent news services. Father Fessio's Ignatius Press often advertises in *Zenit* and in the *National Catholic Register*, a Legionaries-owned weekly whose goal is to become the national American Catholic newspaper. In this it is strongly supported by CUF (Catholics United for the Faith) and the conservative bishops supporting both endeavors. Father Fessio, who also founded Campion College of San Francisco, is chancellor of Ave Maria University in Naples, Florida, which was funded by Thomas Monaghan of Domino Pizza fame, who also financed the creation of Ave Maria School of Law in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Ave Maria College in Ypsilanti, Michigan. Not to be outdone, the Legionaries of Christ are also establishing universities in Sacramento, California and Thornwood, New York in 2006.

These, then, are the highly inbred groups that speak for "The Magisterium" on a day-to-day basis, the groups who filter what most secular and religious news organs report as the voice of the Church.

Christine M. Roussel

## GOOD NEWS FOR THE DIVORCED AND REMARRIED



By far the most frequent questions sent to ARCC come from visitors to our websites who are divorced and remarried or considering remarriage. Others are grateful for our online publications that address the issue, including Fr. James A. Coriden's "The Canonical Doctrine of Reception," and especially, the statement by the ARCC Board, "Remarriage in the Church: Pastoral Solutions." We are delighted that according to a number of sources, including the *Tablet*, *Crosswalk.com*, and *Catholic News*, Cardinal M. F. Pompedda, until his retirement

in 2004 the Vatican's top judicial official as prefect of the supreme tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura, was recently quoted in the Italian daily *La Stampa*, as saying that "In itself, divorce is not a sin, and in certain cases it could even be recommended, to resolve patrimonial or civil problems." The Cardinal spoke in support of the Spanish Jesuit Fr. Eduardo Lopez Azpitarte who had argued in a December 2005 article that Catholics who divorce and remarry are not excommunicated and should be allowed to receive Communion. Cardinal Pompedda argued that "the principle of the indissolubility of marriage does not prevent us from regarding divorce as licit."

Ingrid Shafer

## AWARD NOMINATIONS SOUGHT!

ARCC continues to seek nominations for its 2006 "Hans Küng Rights of Catholics in the Church" award. Candidates for the award must have demonstrated outstanding and ongoing defense of one or more of the rights defined in ARCC's *Charter*

of *Rights* and by their lives shown a unquestioned commitment to these rights. Nominations should consist of a brief paragraph highlighting the contribution of the nominee and/or rationale for the selection.

Please e-mail to Nomination Committee: Sonya Quitslund at kvissleby@iinet.com or Patrick Collins at collinspw@yahoo.com no later than March 1, 2006 (extended deadline), or mail directly to Sonya Quitslund at 14012 Sunrise Dr. N.E., Bainbridge Island, WA 98110.

Sample nomination:

Hans Küng (recipient of 2005 award whose name all future awards will bear) lost his credentials to teach as a Catholic theologian in 1979. Despite this injustice, he remained in the church, actively working to raise awareness of the rights of Catholics to express loyal dissent, promoted inter-religious dialog, and helped define a global ethic as a means to deeper understanding of humankind and human rights.



*You can be an ARCC Angel and help us publish an issue of ARCC Light by making a \$500 donation. This can be done by an individual or a group, and it can be as a memorial or a tribute that will be acknowledged on this page. Please contact Bob Schutzius (rschutz1@prodigy.net) for details.*

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**HANS KÜNG TELLS OF HIS VISIT WITH THE POPE  
"FROM DISILLUSION TO HOPE"**

**AN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN THE MAGAZINE *VIDA NUEVA*, DECEMBER 3, 2005, NUMBER 2.497 (PP 8-10)  
DRAGO PULSEL, TÜBINGEN (GERMANY), ORIGINALLY IN SPANISH  
TRANSLATED BY ROBERT SCHUTZIUS & CARIDAD INDA**

**WE NEED AN ETHIC WHICH IS ACCEPTABLE TO ALL RELIGIONS**

The Swiss-German theologian Hans Küng (one of the strongest opponents of the papacy of John Paul II who took away his credentials to teach as a Catholic theologian for a quarter century after he questioned, among other things, papal infallibility) viewed the election of Joseph Ratzinger as a continuation of the conservative positions of Karol Wojtyła, according to reports from Reuters and various German media. He called the choice of Benedict XVI a "giant disillusion," a sentiment he felt was generally shared by all reformers in the Church. This was Küng's initial public reaction after the election of Ratzinger. Nevertheless, he softened this a bit by saying that the new Pope needed time because change does not happen overnight.

Unexpectedly, the Pope received Küng on Saturday, September 24th at his summer residence in Castel Gandolfo, and granted him a four-hour interview which included dinner. Professor Küng characterized the meeting, which gave rise to a number of reactions, as "a clear sign of hope." After waiting for a reasonable period (the end of the Synod of Bishops in Rome), we went to the residence of Professor Küng in Tübingen, Germany, in an attempt to learn first-hand what occurred at this important meeting with Benedict XVI and why Küng thinks that Ratzinger can surprise us in a positive manner. Küng stated that he saw indications that "one cannot presume this pontiff will necessarily take reactionary positions despite his past performance.".... Küng stated to Reuters in Britain that his long and friendly interview with the Pope constituted a "sign of hope for many people who were horrified by his election." According to Hans Küng, "the Pope is open to new viewpoints."

We began the conversation by discussing the circumstances that led up to the meeting. "I believe that it is important to understand what preceded this meeting. I had many problems with his predecessor," Küng complained, and added that "I was not interested in asking for an audience with the new Pope according to protocol, but rather to engage in a conversation." He had waited patiently more than 25 years without receiving even one personal line in writing, nor the possibility of a conversation, while he continued diligently working on a difficult project of colossal proportions (more than 60 books demanding intellectual rigor and almost indisputable authority). And he waited. Then he said to himself: I will write a letter to the next Pope, whoever that may be, and request an interview. And that is what he did.

"I was certainly surprised, as was the rest of the world, by the election of Joseph Ratzinger, and felt disillusioned, as I said publicly. But I did write him a letter saying that I would like to speak with him since we have known each other for many years. I added that the meeting would be very important." Küng said that he included two or three conditions or aspects that he wanted understood from the start. "I wanted it made clear from the beginning that I was not going to ask for the restitution of my *missio canonica* (ecclesial license to teach) and we should also ignore for the moment the issues on which we did not agree," explained Küng. He did this in part to avoid the creation of a series of difficulties in communication. Moreover, he did not want a meeting which would deal with legal issues and would make the Pope uncomfortable. And in addition, Küng did not consider it necessary since in his 25 years of world-wide travel he had found that the whole world considers him a Catholic theologian even though officially he is not permitted to teach theology.

**A NEW COUNCIL**

Moreover, in case Ratzinger had not seen it, together with his letter to the Pope, Küng enclosed a copy of the letter he had sent to the cardinals before the conclave, to show what his vision of the new Pope and the Church was. The first signs given by the new Pope, he added, would be very important: the naming of the heads of the Curia which should certainly not be done quickly, the first encyclical which would indicate the direction ahead, the first decisions regarding the reorganization of the Curia and the questions of doctrine, morals, and discipline. "It would have been premature for me to speak of a new orientation for the Church or a speedy call for a Vatican III Council which," Küng said, "is so urgently needed."

"The Pope is not fixed in the past, and while keeping his options open, he is disposed to move on a few unconventional matters including some which the inner circle of the Vatican is not expecting," Küng said, explaining his changed attitude towards the Pope. When pressed to explain the basis for his optimism, he said that although he had no illusions about his problems with the structure of the Church, he is almost convinced, for example, that Ratzinger is going to take the initiative in the matter of dialogue with other religions which always has consequences in other areas. Also he is sure that Ratzinger is going to be interested in developing common ethical standards. "I believe that this will be very helpful," the professor told us.

He pointed out that the problem arises when the Vatican begins to apply the principles of global ethics in concrete cases and he added: "There is a common stance not to kill, torture, rape, not to steal, corrupt, betray, not to lie, not to give false testimony, not to abuse sexuality. These are the principles which are found in all religions. In general, Catholics are in absolute agreement. The problem arises when one begins to identify reverence towards life with the condemnation of contraception, or if one had a fixed position towards abortion, or if one had a discriminatory attitude about homosexuality, and if one did not understand the problems associated with, for example, euthanasia," a term which the theologian explained "sounds better in German than in Spanish because we call it assisted death. In addition the term euthanasia in German is associated with the Nazi policy of extermination and for this reason it should be avoided."

The relationship between Küng and now Pope Benedict XVI dates from the time when both were young "progressive" theologians, consultants to the German cardinals in the days of the Second Vatican Council, when Küng, then Dean of the Faculty of Theology in

Tübingen, invited Ratzinger to that University as a professor and they worked together there for three years. Küng recalled those days and said that at the meeting with his old colleague, they chatted as they used to do formerly. Küng said that the interview and dinner with the Pope lasted 4 hours and took place in a relaxed atmosphere, very different from the situation that prevailed in 1983 when the dialogue broke down.

Since they avoided controversial topics, the conversation focused more on Küng's new book, *The Beginning of All Things*, which deals with the relationship between religion and the natural sciences. "I mentioned that I had just returned from a conference in Potsdam with many important scientists. I spoke about the origin of the world. And when I mentioned the sciences, the Pope reacted immediately and said: 'This is very important. Thank you for having sent me your book. It is a very important issue.'" He assured us that the Pope did not criticize anything in the book even though it contained criticisms, for example, about the case of Galileo and also about the Church in general.

In response to the question what he thought about the election of Benedict XVI, Küng said that the possibility remains open that he may adopt a moderate course. "Give him some time. We need to give new popes 100 days, as is usual with the presidents of the United States," advised Küng. "Without any doubt he will need to deal with enormous challenges which his predecessor did not face and which have lain dormant for a long time. Among these are the active promotion of ecumenism with the Christian Churches, the cultivation of collegiality between the Pope and the bishops as well as the decentralization of the direction of the Church, and the guarantee of equality of rights between men and women within the Church," Küng emphasized.

#### **THE AGREED-UPON TEXT**

The professor stated that the press release distributed after the meeting is very important. It was the result of an uncommon gesture which spoke of the new disposition of the Pope and which described the climate of the meeting. Ratzinger suggested that they jointly draft a report of the meeting, keeping in mind that it might stir up different reactions and could be subject to different interpretations. Küng indicated that "...the Pope said that to clarify this we should both write the communication." "We began talking in his office, continued in the garden, and ended up at dinner, so we had an opportunity to agree on the general terms of the document," Küng added. "I said to him: 'You prepare the press release.' I had full confidence in him that he would draft a statement that would be fair and objective. I would then review it and make any needed corrections," Küng said. The question was jokingly asked, if he had to correct the Pope did that support the thesis that the Pope is fallible, and Küng, still in a good mood, without hesitation said that he corrected only one small grammatical error Ratzinger made. Still on the subject of the dinner, the theologian maintained his sense of humor but refused to reveal what was served as if it were top secret. However, he did confirm that he drank wine and not Bavarian beer.

#### **CURRENT EVENTS IN SPAIN**

Our conversation then focused on current events in Spain. Responding to a question about what he thought regarding the relationship between the Episcopacy and the Government, not just on matters of education, Küng insisted that in principle the right of Catholics to protest cannot be denied—for if it were, he explained, the people of East Berlin would have been forbidden to protest against the Communist government—"It is essential to respect the liberty of expression," he added, "even though I am not much in agreement with the policy of the Spanish Bishops. I believe that both sides ought to arrive at a better understanding. I, for example, am against any form of discrimination against homosexuals. But to give an example of how mistakes may creep in and do, I want to say that I do not understand why the Spanish Government has taken up the matter of gay marriage as one of its first issues, presenting an alternative that is hardly acceptable. Because using the term 'homosexual marriages' is not very wise." The professor added that marriage is a cultural institution thousands of years old and sometimes he has the impression that current actions are tainted by a kind of 'leftist fever' and he does not believe that this is necessary. "Sometimes people need to be motivated, but to take to the streets is another thing. The Church also needs to put on the brakes and not abuse its power. It should not use demagogic arguments," he added, indicating that he was speaking in general terms because he did not know all the details of the situation.

We asked him what he thought about the fact that non-Catholics and non-believers must finance the activities of the Catholic Church and was he sure that this is something that should be changed. "I know especially well the situation in Switzerland which is much better than in Germany because the money goes to the local community. This makes a big difference. It is very good also because the bishops do not have so much power, especially over the clergy," Küng said. "I prefer the method by which an assembly elected by the community decides how the money is collected and used." We then returned to his favorite theme, that of a global ethic. In his press release, the Pope mentioned how important this matter was, and we asked Küng if he believed, like the Brazilian theologian Leonardo Boff asserts, that all religions are "infected" with fundamentalism. Professor Küng said that he basically agreed with the idea. "The most dangerous are some Protestants in the U.S. who form 'Bush's Army.' But of course, things change in this area. It has reached its highest point and is declining. I believe that probably many Christian fundamentalists are asking themselves if it was a good idea to send troops to Iraq: if the President says he is a good Christian and yet was not able to adequately help the victims of Katrina and the other catastrophes..., many people could change their minds." But on the topic of fundamentalism, he concluded, "I too have been accused of being a liberal, and a radical in many areas. But whoever knows my books cannot say that I have ignored the essentials of Christianity, or the basic principles of ethics, or the principal articles of faith. I have been unwavering in these matters."

Finally, in light of what has happened in France with the explosion of violence in some cities, we talked about the European paradigm. The professor believes that Europe needs more than technology, more than economics, and much more than communications in the sense of what is offered in the media such as radio or television. "We need a moral foundation. But this cannot be a lay movement, nor clericalism, nor a restoration of a new Christian Europe as envisioned by Wojtyla, nor the restoration of an atheistic state such as happened after the French Revolution. We need an ethical foundation, that is, the acceptance of basic ethical norms which support all the important religions and philosophical traditions and which non-believers are also able to accept. I believe that we would have a better situation in Europe. We need, above all, leaders in politics and economics, also in culture and the sciences, who have renewed ethical convictions. I believe that many people hope this comes about," said Hans Küng.