Hans Kung on Church Reform

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Introduction

1. Kung: born March 19, 1928; Swiss; ordained in 1954 for the diocese of Basle; did 18 months of pastoral work; theologian; peritus at Vatican II; influenced by Congar; wrote doctoral dissertation on justification, approved by Barth and Rahner; 1960 published *The Council: Reform and Reunion*; 1963, first of many lecture tours in USA; very pleased with the reform of Vatican II and very disappointed in implementation; urged Catholics to stay in the church and work for reform; 1979 CDF said he could no longer teach as a Catholic theologian (University of Tubinger created a new ecumenical position for him); very critical of Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict; became increasingly concerned with interfaith dialogue; finds hope in Pope Francis; retired at age 85 from his teaching duties at Tubinger where he taught from 1960 to 2013

2. Church Reform: Kung’s passion; church reform is for the sake of Christian unity; Vatican II said the church must always be reforming itself; “reform the reform movement” of Benedict; hermeneutics of continuity vs. discontinuity

3. Books by Kung: *The Church; On Being a Christian; Infallible? An Inquiry; Theology for the Third Millenium: An Ecumenical View*

I. Kung’s Ecclesiology

A. Methodology: the criteria for reform is Christ as witnessed in the core teachings of the New Testament

B. Models: People of God, Body of Christ and Creation of the Spirit (Corinth as example, role of the Spirit, importance of charismatic gifts, leadership as service, the Spirit gives freedom from sin and law and for life of love and service)
C. Church is graced but sinful (anti-Semitism, abuse of power by leaders, shameful treatment of women)

D. Genuine reform remains faithful to tradition while searching for new and creative ways of responding to needs of the contemporary world; Norm is Christ revealed in the core New Testament message

E. Importance of Truthfulness in the Church, Christ as the truth (Jn 14:6), rigorous candor with self, others, God; truth sets us free (Jn 8:32)

F. Reform for the sake of Christian unity and interfaith dialogue

G. Criticisms of Kung: Congar said he spoke like a revolutionary and not a reformer

II. Specific Issues

A. Kung has continued to address new challenges in the church

B. Issues

1. Infallibility: dispute with Rahner

2. Birth Control: theologians failing Pope Paul VI

3. Mandatory Celibacy: relation to sex abuse

4. Criticism of Pope John Paul II

5. Benedict and Sex Abuse

6. Anglican relations

7. Pope Francis and Hope – reform is the responsibility of all

UPCOMING LECTURES

August 20, 5:30 – 7 p.m., Franciscan Center Theater
A lecture and discussion on “John Courtney Murray on Religious Liberty”

November 16, 2:30 – 5:00 p.m., Queen of Peace Chapel
A lecture and discussion on “Elizabeth Johns on the Quest for the Living God” followed by Mass

December 14, 2:30 – 5:00 p.m., Queen of Peace Chapel
An Advent Retreat including Mass, “Advent and the Virtue of Hope”

For each lecture: $10 pre-registered; $15 at the door