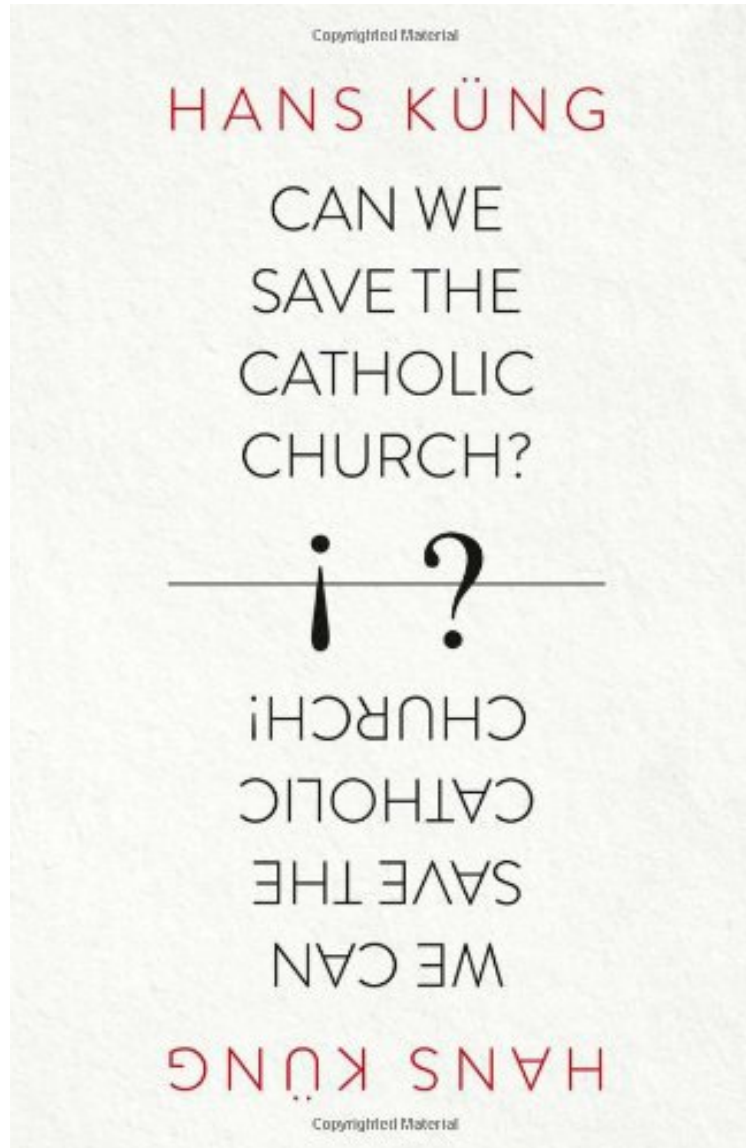


Can We Save the Catholic Church?

Hans Kung

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Hans Kung : Can We Save the Catholic Church? before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Can We Save the Catholic Church?:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Can we start again please?By Anti-ClimaticusCan we start again please?This is a book of contradictions and challenges for anyone who remotely has any attachment to the Catholic Church. Its central contradiction lies in the fact that one the one hand it presents an historically detailed litany of the untruths, corruption and organisational failures of the Church over Millennia. Be it competing popes, the selling of

indulgences, yet alone the outrage of systemic child sexual abuse occurring at all levels of its hierarchy. Yet on the other hand Kung writes, at times passionately, about what one can do to save the Church. Central to this contradiction is the fact that for some of us, we did (do?) experience something positive from involvement with the Church and that is the finding of God, experiencing God and the awesomeness of being part of such great, supportive, fun communities. And thus the central question arising in this book is whether or not we can save what we value from the shipwreck which is the institutional framework within which we currently operate. Like it or not, in a world saturated by 24/7 media, we are children of the reformation and the enlightenment. Even if you wanted to, you cannot escape what is almost a daily reporting of institutional failure. And at the same time, as a collective we are no longer prepared to put up with, what Kung makes evident to be, the way the Catholic Church has trotted out ideological, unsubstantiated, nonsense as divine truth. In the West, we may not have to save the Church as it is likely to die of old age in the foreseeable future. Our Catholic Schools are filled to overflowing yet less than 5% of these young people will be with the church post-school. As Kung demonstrates, the failure to effectively manage the transition from Vatican II (throwing the baby out with the bath water) lost many. Then humane vitae - what a disaster. If ever the people of God were ever messaging a hierarchy that had no sense of the faithful - this was surely the most resonant message sent thru the Church since the Reformation, with almost uniform rejection of what is propagated as all but infallible teaching. After depressing the reader with awesome detail of the many failings, contradictions and limitations of the Church and its teaching (which, if read in conjunction with Spong's deconstruction of much of the 'truth' of the gospels) one is left seriously wondering as to what is left to deal with here. Yet both writers converge on a central point - and that is their respective experience of Jesus and it is this that moves them forward. Despite all the stuff, there is still a pearl of great value to be enjoyed - but how do we find it or retrieve it? Kung provides quite a detailed list of necessary changes, hopes and aspirations. But to be honest, it left me disheartened. There is a long list of things that just have to be done. The list includes married clergy, the ordination of women as priests and bishops, cleaning up (out?) the Curia, people electing their own priests and bishops, getting rid of the Vatican bank, people of God taking their place in the college of cardinals, recognising that marriage both recognises the uniting of the natural bond, but that divorce also passages its dissolution. And of course, a broader insight into sexuality more generally. But for me, these are simply the cost of entry, the very basics that we need to do to begin a change process. I both agreed and disagreed with Kung's suggestion that the change process really has to start with us, with us saying enough is enough. We want change, we want equal participation in decision making. We want to be listened to. We have had enough of the nonsense. While on the one hand there is a growing mass of people ready to support such a process, my experience is that we are in a minority. Those of us who speak out are marginalised. Our friends and family agree with much of what we think, but they are not prepared to risk their links with community to assert their concerns. For me Kung misses two three points which are central to change - awareness raising, a point of focus and spirituality. For change to occur we need to undertake systemic awareness raising. What Kung's work adds to the process is a consolidation of material that can we use for consciousness raising. Yes, if we want change, we need to educate our friends and families of the extent to which this game is over. To this end (and on a lighter note) perhaps you would consider using the material in this book for an awareness raising parish trivia night? Just think of the kinds of questions you can have! Which popes were married? Which had the most children? Which died from STDs? Who appointed the greatest number of their relatives as cardinals? Who was the youngest cardinal ever appointed and at what age? How many 20th century religious orders of pontifical right were founded by men who in turn sexually assaulted their young recruits? Name their founders! Which bishop was recently convicted for sexually assaulting their nephew? Name three popes or bishops who were found out for theft, fraud, corruption or murder? Just imagine printing just one of the many insights in Kung's book in the weekly parish bulletin. Imagine the bumper stickers? Perhaps a deck of playing cards - trivial pursuit Roman style? Too much fun to be legal! There needs to be a catalysing event(s) that brings people together to demand change. Now you'd think that the outrage of systemic child sexual abuse would be sufficient to catalyse systemic change. But it hasn't. You would think that documenting the excesses and failures of the institution, at a global level would be sufficient to catalyse systemic change. But it hasn't. I really wonder, what will it take for the people of God to unite to the point of saying enough is enough? And to say we are taking control! And then there is the question of where we find God in all of this and it is something that Kung takes for granted - that beyond the God talk there are ways in which we can still find God in the Church today and if we can't then we need to attend to this as well. Evangelical God talk is not enough Dr Kung. As I look around our parishes, I see a lot of very tired old men who are our priests, they need a rest and we need fresh, energised people. There a few, if any places where our ministers are enabling us to open to the experience of God, who can teach us how to do this, and who can guide us through this process. If they could, they simply don't have time! The (re)birth of meditative movements are a good step in this direction. And again, in bringing such a process forth we need rethink our notion of who it is that will minister to us today. The church can only be saved by the People of God. But in reality many of us do not want to save it, we want to start again. And the challenge for our new pope is this (resonating the finale from Superstar) - can we start again please? 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Catholic Church critic who needs to be listened to! By Cormac Brian I must say I really enjoyed this book. It is highly critical of what Hans Kung describes as the 'closed

hierarchical and absolutist church' that seemed to develop following Paul VI and in the Pontificates of John Paul II and Benedict XVI and in the reversion to older ways, the re-admission of the Society of Pius X, the restoration of the Latin Mass, the lack of any action on the possibility of marriage for priests and the lack of a positive role for women, the lack of ecumenical sensitivity to other churches, the poor quality of many Bishops in recent years, the Bank and Child abuse scandals and the whole problem of control and secrecy within the Curia which Francis seems to be intent on tackling. While Kung delights in the election of Pope Francis, he sees the Church being highly sick, losing members in all developed countries and needing a strong re-call to the spirit of Vatican 2 and its openness to the modern world. dialog and ecumenism. Fr Hans Kung has fought long and hard as a still faithful Catholic priest who celebrates mass but who is not allowed to teach as a Catholic theologian. He sent his book to Pope Francis and got a fraternal response and reply and then sent his book to all the Cardinals Pope Francis has asked to help him in re-structuring the Curia and central administration of the Vatican, its various Congregations and bank. There are a few things I would disagree with in his writing. There have many positive writings and initiatives I have valued in the last 50 years of the Church since Vatican 2, such as the wonderful 'Evangelii Nuntiandi' by Pope Paul VI, Pope John Paul's documents leading up to the Millennium and Benedict's skillful theological writing and books. I also would like him to have expanded more on the 'ecumenical rescue' of the church he describes, encouraging the faithful to look at and examine the often excellent Christian work being undertaken by other Christian Churches which could act as a model for Catholic renewal such as the development of the Alpha courses and some of the better Mega Churches who are fulfilling great needs. Hans Kung's picture is often bleak, but I would recommend as a good read as he says things that need to be said and discussed with very serious intent if we are to stop the Catholic church from being moribund and irrelevant to a new generation of people. It is a long read - 300+ pages, but after I finished it I felt I wanted to re-read it and that I had 'lost a friend' who at times in his love and loyalty seems heart-broken by his experiences yet who remains hopeful and desirous to speak his truth in his older years. There are so few critical clear and loyal voices in the Church today. He sees himself as a loyal opposition to the Church and certainly deserves to be heard by a wide audience in these early times of the new Pontificate of Pope Francis. I do hope Pope Francis re-instates him as a Catholic theologian. Bless him!

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. A thoughtful, hard hitting essay on what is wrong with the Catholic Church and what can be done about it. By Luv My iPad2 Dr. Kung takes us on a intriguing historical journey through the major chapters of the Roman Church. He pulls no punches, arguing very persuasively what is wrong, how it came to be what it is and what needs to be done to save it. He is committed to a catholic (small c), but is unbending in his criticism. He names names. He clearly has a sound and detailed historical knowledge. My only concern is that it can be seen as a strident polemic. And as such ignored by the very people and institutions that need to hear his views. They are quite cogent as well as thought provoking. For those searching for a modernist, forward looking analysis from a distinguished scholar who is not consumed by the jargon that so encumbered then Church, this certainly will clarify much and give you much to think about.

The Catholic Church has been nearly destroyed by its resistance to change, censured for its abuses. Pope Francis has promised reform: radical theologian Hans Kng here presents what Catholics have long been yearning for: modern responses to the challenges of a modern world. In 1962 the Second Vatican Council met in the hope they could, in the words of Pope John XXIII, open the windows of the Church and let some fresh air in. Hans Kng and Joseph Ratzinger, the future pope, were both there. In *Can We Save the Catholic Church?* Kung relates how after fifty years the Church has only grown more conservative. Refusing to open dialogue on celibacy for priests; the role of women in the priesthood; homosexuality; or the use of contraception even to prevent AIDS, the Papacy has lost touch. Now, amid widespread disillusion over child abuse, the future of Catholicism is in crisis. Pope Francis seems sincere in his wish for a more compassionate Church. The time is ripe for reform, and here Kng calls for a complete renewal of the Church. As grassroots support grows *Can We Save the Catholic Church?* makes an inspiring and compelling case for offering a new Catholicism to the modern world.

From Booklist *Starred* The German Swiss priest and theologian and most famous and prolific contemporary critic of the Roman Catholic Church portrays it as a gravely ill patient in need of radical therapy to recover and thrive. It is suffering from the Roman system, a centralized, hierarchical structure of authority, monarchical in character and imperial in action. Established in the eleventh century by means of a clutch of forgeries (e.g., the Donation of Constantine), that system is, Kng says, primarily responsible for the Orthodox-Roman schism, the Protestant reformation, and the antiscientific and antidemocratic bias in Christianity. Ever entrenching the power of the pope and the Vatican bureaucracy, especially after the 1870 declaration of papal infallibility and again after the second Vatican Council, the system continues to harm the church, driving out believers, lay and clerical, who question it, discouraging vocations to the priesthood, and thwarting ecumenism. Kng's prescription for restoring the church to health is many-faceted, but its effective ingredients derive from early Christianity; it is deeply reformist and revivalist, not revolutionary. Although the translation is idiomatically shaky here and there (e.g., ethician rather than ethicist), and Kng favors precision to scintillation, this updated revision of a 2011 German original is an invaluable summation of a

great religious critics life work. --Ray Olson An impassioned critique of the centrist-absolutist DNA of the Catholic Church New Statesman It is such an easy and accessible read, and at the same time it is a marvellous synthesis of the problems facing the Church at present. It shows how much he cares for the Church and for the Christian message. Fr Tony Flannery, C.Ss.R. Founder of the Association of Catholic Priests Can we save the Catholic Church? has both authority and authenticity. Kngs authorship is its own guarantee of impeccable scholarship and research. Working within the Catholic framework, his expertise and vast learning support his suggestions for examination and reform. British readers will, perhaps, reflect that the full title of the Opposition in the UK Government is that of the Loyal Opposition: disagreement is not necessarily disloyalty. It is this very quality which differentiates Can we save the Catholic Church? from the many books which can only be described as Catholic-bashing. This book makes for frequently uncomfortable reading, but it is worth noting that Kng has submitted a copy to Pope Francis, who has promised to read it. It calls for the Church to embrace the spirit and teachings of Vatican II and fits into the time-honoured framework allotted to Catholic academics who, sometimes at personal cost, strive to make the Gospel meaningful and relevant in their own society. Sr Janet Fearn FMDM This latest book is incisive and sharp; it is also a very accessible read. He examines, over a text running to some 350 pages, the historical background detail that precedes our present circumstances. He honestly confronts the Church as it is and yet lays out a future that continues the Gospel mission of the Church if only we recognise our present reality and respond to it. Chris McDonnell, retired headteacher and member of A Call to Action UK. About the Author Hans Kng is a Catholic priest and theologian. Together, he and Joseph Ratzinger were the youngest advisors at Vatican II, subsequently adopting opposite stances on the Church, with Ratzinger and the Vatican eventually trying to silence Kng for his rejection of Papal Infallibility. Kng is a professor at the University of Tbingen and the founder of the Global Ethic Foundation. A prolific author and respected commentator on Church matters, he is 84 years of age.