

# Küng, Hans

Encyclopædia Britannica Article

born March 19, 1928, Sursee, Switz.

Swiss Roman Catholic theologian whose controversial liberal views led to his censorship by the Vatican in 1979.

Küng studied at Gregorian University in Rome and obtained a doctorate in theology from the Catholic Institute at the Sorbonne in 1957. He was ordained a Roman Catholic priest in 1954, and he taught at the University of Münster in West Germany (1959-60) and at the University of Tübingen (1960-96), where he also directed the Institute for Ecumenical Research from 1963. In 1962 he was named by Pope John XXIII a *peritus* (theological consultant) for the second Vatican Council.

Küng's prolific writings questioned the formulation of such traditional church doctrine as papal infallibility, the divinity of Christ, and teachings about the Virgin Mary. In 1979 a Vatican censure that banned his teaching as a Catholic theologian provoked international controversy, and in 1980 a settlement was reached at Tübingen that allowed him to teach under secular rather than Catholic auspices. His more recent research has focused on interreligious cooperation and the creation of a global ethic. His publications include *Rechtfertigung: Die Lehre Karl Barths und eine Katholische Besinnung* (1957; *Justification: The Doctrine of Karl Barth and a Catholic Reflection*), *Konzil und Wiedervereinigung* (1960; *The Council, Reform, and Reunion*), *Die Kirche* (1967; *The Church*), *Unfehlbar?* (1970; *Infallible?*), *Christ sein* (1974; *On Being a Christian*), *Existiert Gott?* (1978; *Does God Exist?*), and *Ewiges Leben?* (1982; *Eternal Life?*).

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