

The World Evangelical Alliance sent out a press release around the world on the occasion of the 80th birthday of Dr. Manfred Kohl. It was also an official release of the Festschrift dedicated to Dr. Kohl.

- “There are many things that you could say about Manfred. Together with his wife Barbara, he built up World Vision Germany. He helped to establish the structure the World Evangelical Alliance that is has today. But he always wanted to keep to things simple. The Festschrift is called “be focused... use common sense... overcome excuses and stupidity...”. 37 contributors have shown what Manfred has taught all of his life: The simplicity of the bible and common sense don’t exclude each other. He dedicated his life to bring the gospel to as many people as possible,” van Rensburg commented.

Schirmacher noted Kohl’s gift of mentoring and focusing on practical solutions, noting that “he educated leaders and helped them realize their dreams within global Christianity. Particularly in the area of theological education, Manfred left a huge legacy around the world. This is what inspired the last sentence in my preface to the book: Manfred Kohl has left an indelible mark on global Christianity, fusing biblical insights together with practical models for today.”



*Dr Manfred Kohl received a copy of the Festschrift honoring his life’s legacy.
Photo (c) WEA*

Kohl has served in many senior roles in theological education and holds the distinction of having personally visited more theological institutions than anyone else in history (495). He has published over 120 books and articles and has received numerous awards and honorary doctorate degrees. He founded World Vision, the well-known Christian Humanitarian Organization, in several European Countries; Re-Forma., which has set a global standard for non-formal theological education; the Galilean Movement, calling for annually an additional 1 million women and men for biblical ministry and co-chairs the Integrity Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance and the Lausanne Movement.

In the preface to the Festschrift, Schirmacher further noted, “Manfred lived in and learned from multiple cultures, including Germany, the USA, Africa and Canada. He absorbed the best of each of them into his leadership. He lectured in many countries and trained many leaders around the globe, most often on a one-to-one basis. But his was never just a private counseling enterprise. He was always guiding leaders to focus on how to evaluate and restructure their organizations to ensure sustainability and the fulfillment of long-term strategies.”



Fellow Christian leaders and friends celebrated Dr Manfred Kohl's 80th birthday in Dorfweil, Germany. Photo (c) WEA

Regarding Kohl's role in the Integrity Network of WEA & Lausanne, Schirmacher observed that "Manfred is passionate about integrity because for him, corruption is an utter evil and the opposite of everything he teaches churches and institutions about stewardship, responsibility and accountability."

And in summary, Schirmacher commented, "Manfred has been known as a scholar, mentor, advisor and friend who never minced words. He is known to rely on the simple but essential phrases "Be focused" and "Use common sense" when dealing with colleagues on every level. Many times, he has told his listeners, "Stop being a Dummkopf" or "Overcome excuses and stupidity." He is known for speaking candidly and not "through the flowers," as he calls it. However, as numerous colleagues have testified, Manfred has always displayed a deep love and concern for each individual or Christian ministry with whom he interacts. In his unique way, he has made many, many friends."

Upon receiving the Festschrift, Kohl expressed his gratitude saying, "I am overwhelmed with thanksgiving and joy that so many world-renowned scholars have written for this Festschrift. Many, many greetings from all around the world have reached me. I hope that this Festschrift will be used in all the trainings programs for ministry. It is an excellent collection of important material."

The birthday celebration was attended by many evangelical leaders and personal friends, with well-known Christian singer Siegfried Fietz as special guest.