

## **Background**

The International Kolping Society has experienced a phenomenal growth during the last 35 years. Today, the Kolping Society is represented in more than 60 countries. While the resulting diversity is enriching, it also presents a challenge to the International Kolping Society. For along with the necessary and justified diversity, care must be taken to continuously emphasize our common ground; what connects us to each other.

The essential connection is, of course, the person of Adolph Kolping. His life's example is, for Kolping members throughout the world, a challenge and guideline for their own faith-based action.

However, just like the constitution of the Cologne Journeymen's Association was the guiding principle for all newly established Journeymen's Associations, so regulations are also necessary today which are binding on all Kolping Families throughout the world and which therefore form the profile of the Kolping Society internationally.

During recent years, the leadership committees of the International Kolping Society intensively worked on the drawing up of basic documents which, through their ratification, have become binding guidelines for the work and operation of the Kolping Society world-wide. This booklet contains all presently valid basic documents of the International Kolping Society to facilitate the use and reference of these documents. I am certain that the statements of these documents can enrich the work of the Kolping Society and sharpen the profile of our community. It would be very beneficial if as many as possible of those in leadership positions would familiarize themselves with these documents.