

Free Christians for the Christ of the Sermon on the Mount in All Cultures
Worldwide
Max-Braun-Straße 2, 97828 Marktheidenfeld, Germany

Press Release

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Church Before the Courts

“Apparently, No One Disputes Anymore That the Church Is Unchristian”

May the Church continue to call itself “Christian”? This question was the focal point of a trial on Feb. 10, 2010 in Freiburg in Breisgau. Six plaintiffs, Free Christians for the Christ of the Sermon on the Mount, wanted to have Archbishop Robert Zollitsch, the President of the German Bishops’ Conference, enjoined from doing this. That this was not achieved in the first instance before the Administrative Court of Freiburg was no surprise to the plaintiffs: “We won,” commented Dr. Gert-Joachim Hetzel on the result as legal spokesman for the Free Christians. “This is a historic day. For hundreds of years, the Church had people, who did not share their faith, indicted, tortured and killed in the name of Christ. Now, for the first time, it has to answer before the court. And during the trial, no one disputed the fact that until the present time, the Catholic Church is considerably burdened with crime and can therefore only be declared unchristian.”

The plaintiffs not only pointed out the Church’s crimes in the past, but also the sexual crimes by priests in the present, as well as, among other things, the ominous doctrine of “eternal damnation,” under which countless people suffer until today. However, in the judges’ opinion, the plaintiffs lacked the so-called “right of action.” They could not prove that they are entitled, in the name of Jesus Christ, to defend his reputation against the fraudulent labeling practiced by the Church.

The plaintiffs countered this by saying that according to the doctrine of the churches, through baptism already as infants they had become a part of the “mystical body of Christ,” namely, of the Church. According to Hetzel, “That’s as close a blood relation as you can get.” He continued that if the court, however, considers this church doctrine false, then it must intervene all the more now, because then it would have been determined that for 1500 years, mankind has been led astray by a “false magic” and the name of Jesus, the Christ, is being trampled underfoot.

Prior to the trial, the judges refused to provide information on their denominational affiliation. It has not yet been determined whether the plaintiffs will appeal. On March 16, 2010, the Lutheran Church will also stand before the courts in Hannover. It was also charged to no longer call itself “Christian.”