

Press Release

Feb. 8, 2010

Catholic Church before Administrative Court Freiburg Religious Consumer Protection on the Test Stand

The protection of consumers regarding transactions with goods and services is extensively regulated in Germany. No one should be deceived by false or misleading statements and hoodwinked or harmed. Thus, for example, the courts can enjoin the use of misleading or incorrect information in legal transactions. For years, there have been ongoing discussions on whether a similar protection of citizens wouldn't be desirable in the field of religion.

A foray in this direction has now been undertaken by several citizens who call themselves "The Free Christians for the Christ of the Sermon on the Mount," towards the market leader in the religious field. Based on consumer protection regulations, they have admonished the Catholic Church to refrain from using the term "Christian" when referring to its denomination.

Since the Catholic Church did not comply with this request, they filed an action for an injunction with the Administrative Court of Freiburg. This case will be heard on Feb. 10, 2010 in Freiburg.

The plaintiffs, among them a theologian, a physician, two journalists and two jurists, attest to the fact that Roman-Catholic dogmatism has nothing to do with the person and the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, as it is passed down in the Gospels, but is largely contrary to it.

The Catholic Church has not refuted the arguments of the plaintiffs. It trusts that the Freiburg judges will not find fault with the fraudulent labeling and resulting deception of citizens, which the plaintiffs object to. Otherwise, it would, in fact, be the first case giving an effective protection to citizens from religious fraudulent labeling.

Whether the Freiburg judges are capable of deciding for the citizens and against the Catholic Church remains to be seen. The judges did not want to reveal their religious orientation to the citizens who are seeking justice. The extent to which they are obligated to the creed of the Catholic Church may, however, be quite significant for the outcome of this case.

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