



**Junia** heute

## **Mature and self-responsible Christians - desired and yet rejected**

An interesting and profound service is over and inspires me to further reflection. I talk with fellow believers, young people and my family about what I have heard and how I feel - and I realize that different views come to light, some aspects and perspectives on what I have heard that I had not seen before.

The church sometimes complains that too few faith discussions are held - and on the other hand: If the need for discussion or even contradiction arises from faith discussions, then there are few opportunities for "discussion with the clergy" and a lot of rejection, because doctrinal statements may only come "from above".

### **Open faith forums on doctrinal statements**

We live in a time when the local congregation is no longer the sole center of believers' lives. The sometimes very small congregation, the spatial distance in the districts and from church to church does not always allow some interested believers to exchange views on faith issues. The faith conversation takes place little.

Our digital and networked world offers entirely new opportunities to converse on matters of faith in the virtual global world. People with similar interests and convictions come together "virtually", talk about faith issues and also discover that some conditions in the congregation, in the district or even in doctrinal statements do not always stand up to a thorough examination, a questioning of the statements in the light of the gospel. This is basically not surprising - after all, the church itself likes to speak of "progressive knowledge".

### **Our church education**

Young people are growing up in a time and society in which anyone interested can form his or her own opinion from an almost infinite wealth of information sources. In contrast to this is an ecclesiastical education that knows "divine truth" - to put it simply and somewhat exaggeratedly - only from "above".

It is no exaggeration to say that the "critical believer", someone who persistently "questions" doctrinal statements and conditions of the church, very quickly finds himself sidelined and ostracized from the congregation, the district or even the church. Many

"faithful believers" or even ministers eye such brothers and sisters suspiciously and would rather be "left in peace". The enrichment through critical positions is very seldom recognized and appreciated.

### **Conclusion**

Our church needs a cultural change!

Open communication, discussion and constructive arguing about doctrinal statements, mutual appreciation in the case of different beliefs, emerging conflicts in the case of contradictions in the doctrinal statements of the church, discussion forums between leading ministers of the church and the base of the faithful: All this should finally become "normality" in a modern development-oriented church! Unfortunately, there is no culture of open dispute about doctrinal statements in our church, as it is the case in the two big Christian denominations - the church should be grateful when people start searching for "divine truth".

Currently, one can clearly see such difficulty of the Church to deal openly with the religious views of many sisters on the subject of "women in ministry". Why is it so difficult to actively engage women in these conversations? Unfortunately, as long as the Church resists these open conversations, it will continue to run the risk of sidelining and losing active sisters (and brothers) who are interested in the development of the Church, faithful mature Christians.

It is time to initiate a cultural change in this respect.

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