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Evangelical church in Spain banned from worship services in its building

CNE (09.01.2023) - <https://bit.ly/3iyb6ie> - An Evangelical congregation in Spain is forbidden to hold worship services in its church building. According to the municipality, the building does not conform to set requirements for places of worship. Now, the congregation has to meet at a different location.

Members of the Evangelical Baptist Church of Faith, Love and Hope in San Sebastián have been meeting in their worship building for six years. Now, the church does not meet the strict requirements of the municipality anymore, [Protestante Digital](#). There is no unified legislation in Spain on rules for church buildings. Therefore, requirements may vary between municipalities. One is stricter than the other.

Cheaper

In San Sebastián, the rules are quite tight. Places of worship have to adhere to the same rules as bars or nightlife venues, [Protestante Digital](#) reports. That means that church buildings must have a soundproof design, for example. These adjustments are often expensive and hard to afford for small Evangelical communities that often look for cheaper premises in cities.

The building where the Baptist Church had been meeting has now been closed for worship services. Javier Fernández, one of the church leaders, says that the members of the congregations had already done many renovations to adapt the former mechanical workshop into a church.

All had been well until the Covid pandemic, [Protestante Digital](#) writes. After four years of meeting, the police came to the building to examine the premise. At that moment, the church was found to comply with the Corona rules, such as keeping enough distance between members and the mask obligation.

However, after that, the City Council wrote that the venue did not meet the municipality's requirements, Fernández tells the newspaper. To make the necessary changes, the congregation would have to spend between 30,000 and 50,000 euros on a new entrance, adjustment of the height of the ceiling and a new ventilation system, among other things.

The three or four dozen attendees can never bring up this money. Pleas to the City Council for an alternative were declined. The requirements and the deadline to adjust to them remained the same.

Burden

In addition, the church had to buy the building because the owner wanted to sell it. As they had no good alternative in the city, the church leadership felt obliged to take it over, even though the financial burden is heavy. Combined with the renovations, the congregation must find 200,000 euros to pay for all the expenses. It launched a fundraiser to do so.

Photo: Congregation in San Sebastián. Photo YouTube, Protestante Digital
