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The decline in membership of the two historic Christian confessions will have consequences: "Every fifth worship place will no longer be used for its original purpose".

[Evangelical Focus](#) (19.09.2024) - **The fall in membership of the two largest Christian institutions in [Germany](#) is forcing them to sell or demolish hundreds of temples.**

According to an investigation of German newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 603 Roman Catholic temples and 444 worship places of the Evangelical Church of Germany ([EKD](#), the mainline Protestant Church) have been "deconsecrated", meaning that they would no longer be used for worship services.

In the case of the Protestant Church, the buildings have been either sold or demolished.

By 2033, "every fourth or fifth church [building] will no longer be used for its original purpose", says architecture professor Stefanie Lieb. She believes this would mean in practice that 10,000 temples will no longer celebrate worship services.

An example of this trend, reports *Pro*, is that the diocese of Essen already announced in 2006 that it could no longer finance a third of the buildings.

Many of these church buildings have been sold and new owners use them for private business such as restaurants, fitness centres or shops.

The cause: a sharp drop in affiliations

The reason behind everything is the [constant fall in the membership of the two churches](#). The figures of the year 2023 show that the Roman Catholic Church in Germany lost 628,000 members, and the Protestant EKD, 593,000.

The main cause are intentional exits of members who no longer identify with these churches. But the negative statistics are also affected by the [death of members and the fall in baptisms of newborn](#).

Tied to this realities is the fall in church taxes, an important income both the Catholic Church and the EKD receive from all of its registered members.

According to German magazine *Pro*, only in the Southern *Land* of Bavaria (Bayern), the maintenance of Catholic buildings costs over 100 million euros every year.

Experts have warned about the danger that many historic Christian temples fall in the hands of “greedy investors”.
