

Second-Largest Denomination in Germany Caves Into Apostasy

The second-largest denomination in Germany voted to allow pastors to perform gay marriages as official unions and granted the ruling retroactive power, according to a translated release.

Evangelical Church in the Rhineland announced their decision during the same time frame the Anglican Communion sanctioned the Episcopal over similar guidelines.

The formal announcement follows years of the Rhenish Synod's support of same-sex partnerships.

ECR clergymembers who disagree with the unions, however, will not be forced to perform the ceremonies, according to *Evangelical Focus*. The couples may seek a blessing from another parish if their leader refuses.

"With these regulations, the Synod takes into account the different understanding of the Bible on homosexuality bill. So some Landessynodale had made it clear during the debate that they hold the wedding of gay and lesbian couples to be incompatible with the Bible," reads a translation of the release.

The church is believed to have lost more than 1 million members since 1975, according to *Christian Today*.

The trend echoes similar results as American churches: Those that embrace homosexual unions have declined in recent years while those that maintain biblical standards experience growth.