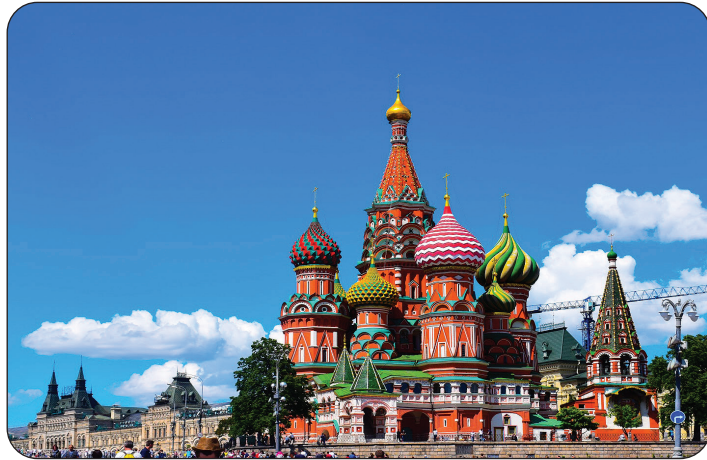


PRAYING FOR THE WORLD

WEEK 41, OCTOBER 11-17

RUSSIA





Life is now materially better for the 144 million Russians after the chaotic years of the early 1990s following the fall of Communism. But freedoms are stifled, the business climate is difficult, and millions still struggle against poverty and ill-health. A whole, wasted, educated generation is opting out of political or civic participation.


The Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) survived Communism and remains the major symbol of Russian identity. Along with smaller Christian groups, it endured terrible persecution between 1920 and 1990 when up to 200,000 leaders died as martyrs (as well as even more parishioners).

The fall of the Iron Curtain opened the whole former Soviet Union, including Russia, to evangelism and church planting and to the rebirth of Christian society. The number of people identifying as atheists fell by more than half. The global Church responded with evangelistic enthusiasm (though not always with wisdom or cultural sensitivity).

Evangelicals have tripled in number since 1991 to about 1.2% of the population and are making a place for themselves within Russian religious culture. Many churches, especially the newer ones, have big goals for evangelism and church planting. Yet open ministry and religious freedom get harder; disunity and shortage of leaders are problems.

 Pray for a Russian renewal and renaissance, centred around a faith in Christ.

 Pray that all that is best about Orthodoxy's 1000-year history will thrive and influence culture and society. Pray that the ROC will make peace with other Christian groups, rather than seeing them as a threat.

 Pray that the many difficulties will, through Christ, serve to strengthen all the different streams of Christianity in Russia.

THE NATIONS

The North Caucasus region



North Caucasus Region


Darker areas indicate regions (Okrugs, Krai, or Republics) which are part of Russia but have a greater degree of autonomy.

The North Caucasus region of Russia is made up of six 'Republics' and one 'Krai', occupying the land between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, with a total population of around 6.5 million people. It's home to over 50 ethnic groups. Nearly all these groups are Muslim and few have either scriptures or local churches.

The North Caucasus region is one of Europe's poorest regions and perhaps its least Christian. It was battered and destabilised by the brutal conflict in Chechnya. It is deeply Islamic, conservative and repressive, and violent against those who can't or won't conform.

Even in this hostile space, where Christian ministry is extremely sensitive and dangerous, groups of Christians are emerging thanks to the faithful work of Christians from the Russian Federation and beyond.



 Pray for transformation, healing and new life in the Caucasus. Pray for courage and protection for the few Christians.

Praying for the World is a free weekly prayer guide to inspire and inform the whole church to pray for the whole world. Visit www.lausanne.org/pray to start any week. Created through the partnership of Operation World and the Lausanne Movement.