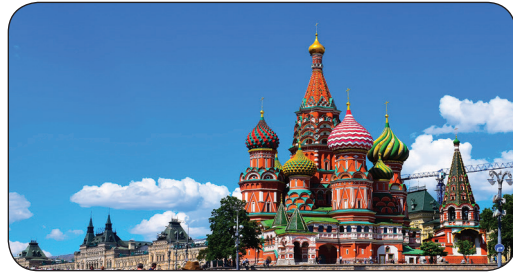


PRAYING FOR THE WORLD

WEEK 41, OCTOBER 10-16

RUSSIA




Russia's descent into authoritarianism and religious nationalism during the past decade has led to repression, foreign wars, economic problems, and increasing isolation. Russia has one of the lowest fertility rates and one of the oldest populations in the world and its population of 145 million looks set for decades of decline. Many of the younger and better educated people have left the country.


The war on Ukraine has resulted in thousands of deaths, in war crimes, torture, destruction of entire cities, and increasing global instability. The geopolitical, military, economic and humanitarian implications of the war have been felt globally, and the fear of a new Cold War era (or even larger scale wars) has dawned upon the world.


The Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), survivor of terrible persecution under communism, has, at least among its national leadership, evolved to be a cheerleader for the government, promoting a Christian nationalism that embraces Ukraine and Belarus in one 'Russian world', and that stands in opposition to the West. A few Orthodox and Protestant clergy and lay people have protested Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but many have kept silent in the face of state propaganda


and intimidation. The breach of fellowship between Ukrainian and Russian churchgoers of many denominations is deep and severe.

Evangelicals have tripled since 1991 to about 1.2% of the population. In evangelism, many newer churches have big goals for church planting. Lack of religious freedom, disunity, and lack of leaders are problems for the evangelical community.

 Pray that the current crisis will spark repentance, renewal, and renaissance in Russia, centred around genuine faith in Christ.

 Pray that all that is best and most Christlike about Orthodoxy's 1000-year history will thrive and influence culture and society. Pray for Christ to be a living, active presence at the heart of the ROC.

 Pray for peace, both in Ukraine and beyond. Pray for all churches to be active agents of justice and peace.

 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.