



GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY

**A Guide to the World's Largest Religion
from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe**



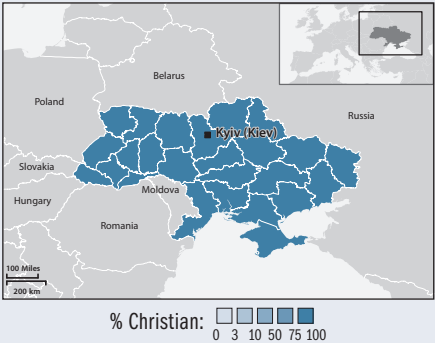
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Christianity in Ukraine

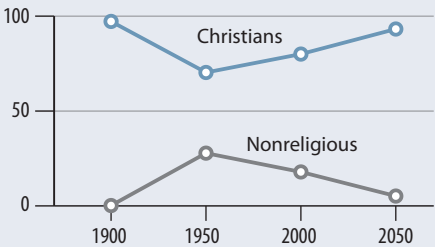
Orthodox Christianity has over 2,000 years of history in Ukraine. Tradition states that in the 1st century the apostle Andrew visited what is today Ukraine. Volodymyr I adopted Christianity as the state religion in 988 at the behest of his wife, Anna Porphyrogenita, and Byzantine (Eastern) Christianity grew quickly during the 10th and 11th centuries. Ukraine has had a turbulent political history, which includes the 13th-century Mongol invasion, the 14th-to-15th-century rule of Lithuania and Poland, and 20th-century imperialism from Russia. Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union from 1922 to 1991, a period marked by famine, class struggle, mass killings, and suppression of public religion. Orthodox Christianity was revived in the 1990s, but in two competing groups: one under Moscow and the other under Kyiv. The divide in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church has little to do with theology and much to do with history, national identity, and politics.

After the 2014 Ukrainian revolution, Russian military forces invaded Ukraine’s Crimean Peninsula and illegally claimed it for Russia via a sham referendum. Pro-Russia and anti-government groups then demonstrated in the Donbas and Luhansk regions, where separatist forces declared independence. Russian president Vladimir Putin recognized their independence in February 2022 and subsequently invaded Ukraine. In the first month of the war, upward of 7,000 Ukrainians were killed and at least 10 million people were displaced.

Catholicism has had a difficult history in Ukraine, with forced elimination of Catholicism in 1839 and the stripping of Catholic civil rights and spiritual life in 1946. Persecuted alongside all religions under the Soviet state, Catholicism became the second largest denomination after the fall of the Soviet Union. Evangelical Christianity also grew rapidly after 1991, with Ukraine known as the “Bible belt” of Eastern Europe. The country is known for training and sending missionaries even though Protestant, Evangelical, and Pentecostal churches are comparatively small.



Religion in Ukraine



Ukraine has historically been a Christian country and remains so today, but Christianity experienced decline while the country was part of the Soviet Union. The country was 97% Christian in 1900, dropped to 60% by 1970, then rebounded to 86% by 2020. Likewise, the nonreligious grew from virtually zero in 1900 to a peak of 38% in 1970, only to drop to 12% today.

Indicators & Demographic Data

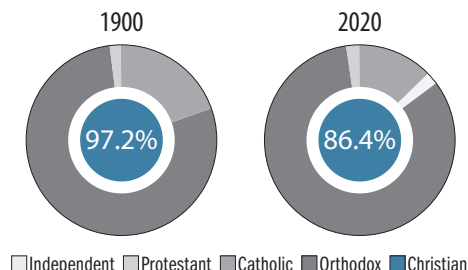
Population (2020)	43,579,000
% under 15 years	16%
Capital city (pop.)	Kyiv 2,988,000
% urban dwellers	70% (-0.27% p.a.)
Official language	Ukrainian
Largest language	Ukrainian (76%)
Largest people	Ukrainian (76%)
Largest culture	Ukrainian (76%)
Development	75
Physicians	30
Gender gap	1%

Bible Translations	Churches	Missionaries	Gospel Access
Languages.....67	Denominations.....140	Received.....6,000	1900.....Very high
Full Bible.....41	Congregations.....45,600	Sent.....440	2020.....Very high

Facts to Consider

- Religious minorities are openly persecuted in Crimea, such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Orthodox Church of Ukraine (Kyiv), and especially Muslim Crimean Tatars.
- A recent report found that only 20% of Ukrainian Orthodox said religion was "very important" in their lives, yet 91% said they have religious icons in their homes.
- Domestic violence is a massive problem, with 101,000 complaints from January to June 2020 alone (a 40% increase from the prior year). Spousal abuse is common and was exacerbated by COVID-19 lockdowns.
- The number of Jews declined from 720,000 in 1900 to around 45,000 today, mostly because of the Holocaust and then emigration. Despite Ukraine having its first-ever president of Jewish background (Volodymyr Zelenskyy), the Jewish community still experiences anti-Semitic actions such as vandalism and hate speech. Most Jews live in the Donbas and Luhansk regions.
- Islam dates to the 15th century, and estimates of adherents range from half a million to 2 million. Muslim community leaders report various kinds of discrimination, including being unable to obtain more land for burial sites and often being accused of "extremism" and "terrorism."

Christian Traditions in Ukraine



As has been the case historically, Christianity in Ukraine is primarily Orthodox. In 1900, Orthodox made up 78% of Christians, followed by Catholics at 20% and Protestants at just under 2%. By 2020, Orthodox had an even greater share of Christians (83%), followed by Catholics (13%). Protestants and Independents have both grown and each represent 2% of Christians. Jehovah's Witnesses are the largest Independent denomination, with over 280,000 members.

Christian Families in Ukraine

Family	Population 2020	%	Trend	Change
Eastern Orthodox	31,304,000	71.8	—	-0.2
Eastern-rite Catholic	3,707,000	8.5	—	-0.2
*Pentecostals/Charismatics	1,400,000	3.2	↑	0.8
Latin-rite Catholic	1,193,000	2.7	↑	2.2
*Evangelicals	520,000	1.2	↑	1.3
Oriental and other Orthodox	411,000	0.9	↓	-2.6
Jehovah's Witnesses	255,000	0.6	↓	-1.6
Baptist	179,000	0.4	—	-0.4
Reformed, Presbyterian	130,000	0.3	—	0.0
Adventist	48,100	0.1	↓	-3.5
Restorationist, Disciple	16,500	<0.1	↑	4.1
Hidden believers in Christ	11,300	<0.1	↑	2.9
Latter-day Saints (Mormons)	10,800	<0.1	—	-0.1
United church or joint mission	3,000	<0.1	—	0.0
Mennonite	2,500	<0.1	↓	-1.2

Eastern Orthodox make up 72% of the country's population (31.3 million) and is the largest Christian family. There are three large Ukrainian Orthodox churches: the Patriarchate of Moscow (13.5 million), the Patriarchate of Kyiv (16 million, which split from Moscow after the fall of the Soviet Union), and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (800,000). Moscow only partially recognizes the Patriarchate of Kyiv. After Ukrainian Orthodox, the largest Orthodox traditions are Russian, Old Ritualist, Bulgarian, and Armenian. Catholics are the second largest Christian family and includes both Eastern- and Latin-rite. Pentecostals/Charismatics are mostly in Protestant or Independent denominations such as Christians of Evangelical Faith (which is a Pentecostal denomination), the Church of God of Prophecy, and Evangelical Christian Pentecostal Zionists.

* These movements are found within Christian families
 — no change
 ↑↑ extreme growth
 ↑ growth
 ↓↓ extreme decline
 ↓ decline