

Russia Religion Law: Stopping Terrorists or Persecuting Christians?

Last summer, President Vladimir Putin extended a controversial 1997 law restricting religious activities in Russia.

Christians in the West were more alarmed and concerned about the law than were Russia's Christians. They feared the law would prevent evangelism and slow the rapid growth of Christianity in the country.

But now, six months later, one prominent Russian pastor says the Russian church can live with the law.

I recently interviewed Pastor Sergey Lavrenov of Light of the Word Church in Tyumen (Western Siberia).

He told me the intent of the law is to prevent unrestrained access to the country by Islamic terrorists. He admits the law has placed restrictions on the activities of foreign missionaries, but when invited by a church, pastors and missionaries are not prohibited from preaching in Russian churches.

Also, Lavrenov claims Russian citizens remain free to share their faith with others. He says Russian legislators may consider several amendments to the law.

Pray the gospel message will advance regardless of actions taken by the Russian government.

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