



Lithuania

Republic of Lithuania

Europe

Geography

Area 65,301 sq km. The southernmost of the three Baltic states. Flat, arable land with many forests and lakes.

Population	Ann Gr	Density
2010 3,255,324	-0.96%	50/sq km
2020 3,058,404	-0.55%	47/sq km
2030 2,908,516	-0.52%	45/sq km

Capital Vilnius 541,000. **Urbanites** 67.2%. **Pop under 15 yrs** 15%. **Life expectancy** 71.8 yrs.

Peoples

Baltic 83.6%. Lithuanian 83.5%.
Slavic 14.8%. Polish 6.7%; Russian 6.3%; Belarusian 1.2%; Ukrainian 0.6%.

Other 1.6%. Jews, Tatars, other Europeans, Asians.
Literacy 99.6%. **Official language** Lithuanian.
All languages 12. **Indigenous languages** 4.
Languages with Scriptures 1B1 2NT 3por.

Economy

An industrial and agricultural economy that has progressed significantly since inclusion in the European Union. Significant emigration into more affluent EU countries, however, has had a detrimental effect.

HDI Rank 46th/182. **Public debt** 29.3% of GDP. **Income/person** \$14,086 (30% of USA).

Politics

A parliamentary democracy. In the 14th Century was a powerful duchy controlling much of West Russia, Belarus and Ukraine. Later, a joint state with Poland, until annexation by Russia at the end of the 18th Century. Gained independence in 1918. Occupied by the Soviets 1940-1990; independent again in 1990. A member of the EU, and swiftly orienting to the West.

Religion

The last European nation to be Christianized. Because of strong Polish influence, Catholicism was politically dominant until the Soviet occupation, when all faiths were repressed. Religious freedom, but preference shown to Catholics and other traditional groups. Evangelical and other new religious groups have faced some opposition and negative bias.

Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Christian	85.36	2,778,745	-1.1%
Non-religious	14.20	462,256	0.1%
Jewish	0.16	5,209	-3.3%
Muslim	0.14	4,557	2.1%
Ethnoreligionist	0.12	3,906	2.7%
Other	0.02	651	-1.0%

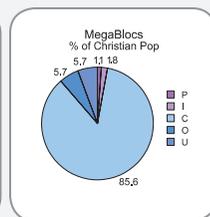
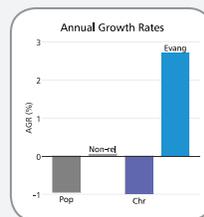
Christians	Denoms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	11	0.95	31,000	-2.0%
Independent	13	1.51	49,000	-2.1%
Catholic	1	73.11	2,380,000	-0.6%
Orthodox	2	4.85	158,000	-1.5%
Marginal	2	0.21	7,000	5.6%
Unaffiliated		4.70	154,000	-6.5%

Churches	MegaBloc	Congs	Members	Affiliates
Roman Catholic Ch	C	606	1,425,150	2,380,000
Russian Orthodox	O	63	100,649	155,000
Old Believers	I	20	8,750	35,000
Lutheran Ch	P	55	7,200	18,000
Jehovah's Witnesses	M	24	3,333	6,000
New Apostolic Church	I	27	2,727	6,000
Reformed Ch in L	P	9	1,200	6,000
Word of Faith	I	36	1,500	2,600
Pentecostal Union	P	26	1,333	2,000
Seventh-day Adventist	P	21	900	1,800
Baptist Union	P	8	500	750
Other denominations[18]		64	6,588	10,610
Total Christians[29]		959	1,559,830	2,623,760

TransBloc	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Evangelicals			
Evangelicals	1.1	35,894	2.7%
Renewalists			
Charismatics	1.1	37,171	5.1%
Pentecostals	0.1	2,150	3.1%

Missionaries from Lithuania

P,I,A 10 (long-term).



Answers to Prayer

1 Religious freedom in the post-Soviet era has seen many dynamic new Christian groups emerge, injecting new life into the nation's spirituality. Unity between different Christian groups and denominations is very good, especially for a former Soviet state.

Challenges for Prayer

1 Freedom has brought progress. Doors for the gospel remain open, and evangelical positions can have a hearing in society. However, with freedom came many dangers – increased materialism, hedonism and nihilism. Substance abuse, suicide and, most sinister, trafficking women for prostitution in the West all disintegrate the nation's foundations. Often, the most gifted leave Lithuania for more lucrative positions elsewhere. Economic growth must be paired with real social and spiritual transformation; pray that God would bring massive societal change through His people.

2 Catholicism retains a crucial role in Lithuanian society, but has not fully emerged from old ways of thinking to embrace its potential for godly influence in society. Pray that the Catholic Church uses its significant influence to draw people to Christ. Only one-sixth of Catholics attend church weekly. Fellowship with and acceptance of other Christian groups must be improved. Several Franciscan, charismatic and evangelical-style networks in the Church bring young leadership, new thinking and fresh spirituality; pray for their further growth.

3 The other confessions of Christianity also face many challenges:

a) **Traditional groups** (Lutheran, Reformed and Orthodox) are struggling just to maintain their numbers, as are most denominations. The Orthodox are almost exclusively ethnic Russians; other traditional groups are mostly Lithuanian. Lutherans desire to see their Pietistic heritage renewed. Pray for new life in these historic groups.

b) **Baptists, Pentecostals and Adventists**, the more established of the evangelicals in Lithuania, have struggles of their own. Retained traditions, which saw them through the Soviet era, must be balanced with the spiritual and organizational needs of a new era. Pray for new spiritual impetus for these faithful groups.

c) **Newer Pentecostal and charismatic churches** grew quickly in the last decade through dynamic spirituality combined with active outreach and ministry. Growth looks set to continue; but against this backdrop, quality discipleship of new believers is key. Pray also for these churches to become genuinely indigenous, not just carbon copies of popular Western expressions of the Church.

d) **All believers.** Some low-level prejudice against new religious groups exists, and there is still a widespread perception that evangelicals are a sect. Leaders and congregations must gain a greater understanding of their own evangelical faith before they can assert it in a broader context. The rapid growth of the early '90s has passed, and pastors are kept busy with pastoral responsibilities. Pray for God to raise up those gifted in evangelism.

e) **Evangelical unity.** There is still no Evangelical Alliance in Lithuania. Increased cooperation and demonstrable unity are essential if evangelicals are to have a greater impact on the nation.

4 The shortage of trained Christian leaders is a result of rapid growth in the newer churches and difficulty in establishing denominations. Religious freedom has also yielded an increase of cults and theological error. Solid biblical foundations must be established, but leaders trained abroad too frequently do not return. Catholics have four seminaries and three faculties in universities; Lutherans have one. The Pentecostals founded a pastoral, mission-oriented training institute, Vilnius College; the Baptist Union has a training institute (NEBIM). The non-denominational Evangelical Bible Institute (EBI) is in the process of accrediting a bachelor of theology degree. LCC International University is an inter-denominational and inter-confessional institution with a vision to train future leaders with a Christian worldview. Pray that these institutions might raise up godly, well-educated and visionary leaders for the nation.

5 Expatriate missions. About 30 missionaries minister long-term in the country, plus around 35 Western faculty and staff of the Lithuania Christian College. **YWAM** has a team serving alongside local parishes, working with families, youth, orphanages, summer camps and humanitarian aid distribution. Pray for more missionaries to serve in this land; there are still many opportunities for foreigners called of God to have a Kingdom influence here.

6 Specialized ministries need prayer. These include:

- a) Radio.** **TWR** broadcasts 30 minutes/day. More radio programmes in Lithuanian are needed. Good News Center was formed by a wide range of Protestant denominations to facilitate spreading the gospel by radio in Lithuania.
- b) Internet.** The widespread use of Russian and English give Lithuanians good access to Christian resources. Some churches or unions have excellent websites. Pray for the full potential of the Internet to be utilized with the younger generation.
- c) Christian literature.** A growing but still very small ministry. Two modern Lithuanian versions of the Bible and over 100 Christian books are published in Lithuanian. Word of Faith produces a bi-monthly newspaper. Good books are desperately needed; The Bible Society serves well, but also struggles. Pray for the seven Christian publishing organizations and their vital role in building up Christians and spreading the Christian worldview into society.
- d) Student ministries.** **LKSB(IFES)** operates in four cities at eight universities. **CCCI** began ministry work in 1993. **SU** camps have been running since 1997. Summer camps are popular and highly strategic for evangelizing and discipling young people.