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Russia Builds 3 New Churches a Day, Orthodox Leader Says

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Anton Kardashov / Moskva News Agency

Russian Orthodox Church leader Patriarch Kirill has claimed that Russia constructs three new churches per day less than two weeks after mass protests erupted over the construction of a new cathedral in Yekaterinburg.

The Orthodox Church's influence has grown in recent years as it has received increased support from the Kremlin. Last year, Patriarch Kirill announced that 25 new churches were built in Moscow alone.

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"It's not because we have too much money and don't know where to spend it on. Our people who have gone through years of atheism [under the Soviet Union] have realized with their minds and hearts that without God, nothing happens," Patriarch Kirill was quoted as saying by the state-run RIA Novosti news agency on Sunday.

Patriarch Kirill added that the increased concentration of churches will give Russians the opportunity to feel closer to God, lead happier lives and tackle the difficult circumstances of the modern world.

Earlier this week, the Bell news website reported that the Kremlin will allocate 2.8 billion rubles ($43.4 million) toward luxury renovations at Patriarch Kirill's 2.5 hectare (6.1 acre) mansion south of St. Petersburg.

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