



## What are their needs?

Cowboys often attend rodeos, horse shows, or trail rides on weekends. This limits the time they have to attend a traditional church with traditional schedules. They need cowboy church services at their Sunday morning events. They also need a local cowboy church in their area that holds its main worship service on a specific weeknight each week. The cowboy church should have a method of worship that reflects the cowboy's way of life. The message should not be watered down. It should be faithful to the teachings of the Bible. This has proved to be a very effective approach to reaching those who cannot attend church on Sunday mornings.



[www.peoplegroups.info](http://www.peoplegroups.info)

If you cannot locate this people group in your community, find them online at [www.peoplegroups.info](http://www.peoplegroups.info), a site sponsored by the North American Mission Board, SBC.

## How can we pray?

- Pray for cowboy missionaries as they minister at the rodeos, horse shows, and on trail rides.
- Pray for the new churches that have been started to be successful and multiply.
- Pray that God will raise up preachers to help start cowboy churches throughout North America.



Information may be updated by writing [peoplegroups@namb.net](mailto:peoplegroups@namb.net).



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# Cowboys of North America

## Who are Cowboys?

**A**merican cowboys are an icon in the United States and around the world. The term “cowboy” is derived from the Spanish word *vaquero*. It is a word that describes individuals who herd cattle on horseback. Originally, it was used as a derogatory term but soon became a label of honor.

Cowboys make up a rich culture of people who work cattle, ride horses, and compete in rodeos. They are hard workers with a very independent spirit. They are known to be “straight shooting,” down to earth, common sense people.



Population in North America: Unknown

Language spoken by Cowboys: English and Spanish

Top locations: Cowboys are scattered all across North America. They represent ranchers, rodeo contestants, trail riders, and those who show horses.

## What is their heritage?



The cowboy tradition was greatly influenced by the merger of the Spanish *vaqueros* and the English cattle herders. The dry climate of the western regions made it necessary to graze their cattle on the wide open range. Because of the vast area of operation, horses were an indispensable form of transportation. Their “tools of the trade” were derived by necessity.

The broad brimmed cowboy hat protected the cowboy’s head, ears, and neck from the blazing sun. The cowboy boots were designed for quick mounting and safe dismounting. The chaps protected the rider not only from the weather, but also from the brush and thorns he encountered on the trail. Roundups and rodeos became a means for the cowboys to demonstrate their skills. Most recently, their culture has been greatly influenced by the incredible growth of the rodeo industry. In time, rodeo events became popular in the eastern United States. Since the 1970s, rodeos have become one of the fastest growing athletic events in the nation. Today, many rodeo contestants are young, educated, and from an urban background. Most have never worked on a cattle ranch.

## What are their beliefs?

Most cowboys believe in the God of the Bible, but do not have a personal relationship with Jesus. Many have given up on church and religion. Many of them do not feel that they are accepted in the “fancy churches” by the “fancy people.” It is not uncommon to hear them say, “My church is out on the trail,” or “I can worship God in wide open spaces.” They are as diverse in morality as the rest of North America’s population. Some are God-fearing people, while others are living very immoral lives. Many of them have very distorted views of who God is. They often think of Him as their provider and protector, but not their judge. Most of them are very open to the gospel and respectful to a sincere messenger of the Lord.



## What can my church do?

- Gather all those within your church who have a desire to reach out to the cowboy culture.
- Identify the cowboy culture in your county by searching the Internet for key words such as: rodeo, barrel racing, bull riding, horse stables, and horse shows. You can also gain information from bulletin boards at feed and tack stores. Use this information to locate and attend local cowboy events.
- As a church, adopt a cowboy missionary. Pray for him as he organizes cowboy church services at rodeos, horse shows, and trail rides.
- Encourage your church to partner with the North American Mission Board and the Cowboy Church Network of North America to plant a cowboy church.
- Pray that God will call out preachers and leaders to help plant new cowboy churches.
- Educate your mission groups about the work of the Cowboy Church Network of North America.
- Start a prayer group with the intention of praying the doors open.
- Go to events that attract those from the cowboy culture in order to understand them and initiate relationships that can lead to an evangelistic witness. Pray that God will help you see what cowboys are seeing and feel what they are feeling. Engage their culture by simply enjoying their events. After several weeks of just hanging out, you will develop friendships with a few key people. In time, your compassion will earn you the right to be heard.
- Request to rent a facility on a weeknight to host an exhibition event. Recruit your new cowboy friends to help you organize the event. They will gladly help you find the pole benders, barrel racers, mounted shooters, a flag team, and bull riders. This will give them ownership, and they will bring their friends.
- Schedule a cowboy buckle drawing. The drawing card will also be used to gather prospects and record decisions for salvation. Plan to have a cowboy preacher share a short “to the point” evangelistic message before the last exciting exhibition. Do the drawing after the last exhibition. After the event, use the cards to tabulate prospects’ contact information and decisions for salvation. This will be very helpful when you start a cowboy church there.
- Partner with an existing cowboy church to facilitate their ministry and outreach among cowboys.
- Send a student mission team to help with Vacation Bible School at a cowboy church.
- Send a construction team to help build a cowboy church (barn raising) where needed or build a riding arena for a cowboy church’s outreach ministry.
- Give to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering.
- Your church can pray for and give to the Cooperative Program and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North America®. These funds are very instrumental in planting churches and supporting missionaries.
- Visit the official Web site for the Cowboy Church Network of North America at [www.cowboycn.org](http://www.cowboycn.org).

