

What are their needs?

The spiritual void in Québec needs to be filled. People are trying everything when all they really need is Christ. In order to encounter Him, they need to know Christians who will model Christ in love and service and establish trust relationships with them. The population of Québec is aging at a greater rate than almost anywhere in North America, and ministry to senior citizens could be very important. The student population in the province is also proportionally high, and there are currently only two Baptist-related student ministries operating (one in Montreal and one in Sherbrooke). Church planting in French has historically been severely neglected, even oftentimes written off as impossible or too difficult.



www.peoplegroups.info

If you cannot locate this people group in your community, find them online at

www.peoplegroups.info, a site sponsored by the North American Mission Board, SBC.

What is keeping the gospel from them?

Barriers to the gospel include the pleasures of a good life; dependence on the government for general well-being; the rejection of religion in general and Protestantism in particular; the perception that one is "saved" through good works and infant baptism; and the feeling that the whole society is "Christian." It is felt that religion is a personal affair, not to be discussed with mere acquaintances, and that all beliefs are to be tolerated. There is a very negative perception of overt evangelism, such as door-to-door. The scarcity of vital Protestant churches as a model, as well as limited resources in French, creates a barrier. Mistrust of English-speaking people, Western Canadians, and Americans is a natural result of ongoing unresolved political and cultural issues and often makes ministry difficult.

Information may be updated by writing peoplegroups@namb.net.

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Who are the Québécois?

Québécois are a French-speaking people group with a long history and rich cultural heritage in the Canadian province of Québec. They number approximately 7 million and live mainly in the southern part of the province along the Saint Lawrence River. They speak their own brand of French which retains much of the vocabulary and expression of the 16th and 17th centuries when their ancestors came to North America from France. Many are bilingual in French and English, but a surprising number still speak only French. Québécois are proud of their separate identity and often make it clear that they are different from the rest of Canada. A strong nationalistic fervor motivates them to preserve French culture in the midst of pervasive English influence. Cultural Catholicism is deeply rooted in Quebec, although a large majority no longer practices the religion. Quebec is thus very tolerant, and immigration from many different countries has made it a very pluralistic society. One salient fact is that the Québécois are currently the least-reached resident (not recent immigrant) people group in North America with around 0.5% evangelical population in the province of Québec.



Population: 7,400,000

Languages spoken by Québécois: French (primarily)

Locations with highest population of Québécois in North America:

Montreal
Quebec City
Hull/Gatineau
Chicoutimi
Sherbrooke
Trois-Rivières

What is their heritage?

Most of today's Québécois people are descendants of the original settlers who arrived before the English takeover in the 18th century. They learned early to be self-sufficient as they did not have much attention from the mother country, and subsequently were conquered by the English. In all of this time, the Catholic Church was very influential, and controlled many aspects of life in the province, including family size, education, activities, and whether one was rural or urban. In the 1960s and 70s a "quiet revolution" saw a majority of Québécois abandon the Church, rebelling against its pervasive influence. However, many of the old attitudes remain. It was said at one time that reading the Bible would make one crazy, and this viewpoint seems to be widespread even today. Protestants in particular are not held in high regard, due partly to the English influence, and partly to the legalistic nature of many of the historic Protestant churches in the province. They are regarded by many as fanatics, members of cults, dull, and lacking in spiritual depth. A spiritual void leads many to turn to Eastern or New Age religions, or to astrology. Divorce and suicide rates are among the highest in North America. Many do not bother to wed; and homosexuality is widespread and very open.

"Most Québécois have some sort of Catholic heritage, but many are now so far distant from it that they have practically no religious background."

What are their beliefs?

Most Québécois have some sort of Catholic heritage, but many are now so far distant from it that they have practically no religious background. Church workers often find people who have no idea what a Bible is! Québec is a thoroughly postmodern society, evidencing all the characteristics of such. However, there are some bridges that can help span the barriers. These include a basic concept of and belief in the existence of God, the search for spiritual meaning in life stimulated by the spiritual void in the province, and the high percentage of people who understand both English and French. Québécois are also very polite and hospitable on a one-on-one basis and have a gregarious social nature, which can be used as a bridge.

What can my church do?

Prayer — focusing on the people as well as calling out workers to the harvest

- As a church, vote to adopt the Québécois. Begin learning about and praying for them on a regular basis.
- Pray for new believers who are often persecuted by family members or in the workplace.
- Pray specifically for the breaking down of barriers to the gospel.
- Many Québécois visit the U.S. every year for vacation, especially New Jersey, the beaches of Virginia and the East Coast, and Florida. Find out if any visit your area and make plans to meet them, serve them, and develop relationships.

Networking for Evangelism — identifying relationships

- Develop a partnership between your student/youth ministry and one of those in Québec.
- Seek to find out needs that churches in Québec are encountering and endeavor to help meet those needs.
- Offer to host an exchange student from Québec.
- Investigate your local institutions of higher education to see if Québécois students might be enrolled, and make plans to meet and serve them.

Scripture

- Become an advocate for the translation and distribution of spiritual materials in French.

Communications

- Many Québécois listen to religious programs on radio and TV when they would never set foot in a church; but almost all of these are in English. Advocate for French translation and/or subtitling on programs broadcast to Québec.

How can we pray?

- Pray for current evangelical Christians in Québec. Pray that they would have the courage to share Christ with other Québécois, in spite of the ridicule and persecution that they often undergo. Pray that they would see the possibility of the gospel spreading widely through faithful witness and the building of relationships.
- Pray for laborers in the harvest. Church leaders are few, often feel lonely, and are not well supported. There is currently one evangelical church for every 20,000 people in the Montreal area. The Québécois are the best ones to reach their people, but church leaders are sadly lacking among them.
- Pray for churches to be planted among the French-speaking Québécois—churches that will have a DNA of multiplication, simple churches that will not require too many resources and thus limit their potential for reproduction and multiplication.
- Pray that efforts to serve the community by evangelical churches would improve how they are seen by the average Québécois, and that many might thus be persuaded to stop avoiding them.