

WHY QUEBEC?

We believe the gospel — the message of salvation through Jesus Christ, the Son of God alone — is of first importance for all men and women, of every tribe, tongue and nation everywhere on this earth. We believe, as followers of Christ, we are heralds of this good news.

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ABOUT US:

Most of you reading this know at least one of us four. We are two families, but we are one family in Christ and therefore one family on mission. We firmly believe that the message of the gospel must be heard, but we also believe that the community formed by the gospel must be seen. For both of these reasons, our families are pursuing ministry together; to spur each other on in the Great Commission of our Lord and to tangibly showcase the unity we share in the family of God.

The Murray family — Aaron, Melissa and their two boys, Sawyer and Weston — came to Sioux Lookout, Ontario (don't worry, we hadn't heard of it either) four years ago from Southern Ontario. Aaron pastors the children and youth in our local church and Melissa works as a Speech Language Pathologist for the Northwestern Health Unit. The Laustsen family — Zach, Olive and their daughter, Sage — came to Sioux Lookout one year later from Nova Scotia and Zach works as an Air Traffic Specialist for Nav Canada and Olive operates a private ceramics studio from home.

Both of our families became members of Calvary Baptist Church and it was in our local church context that our shared conviction to minister in underserved mission fields began to take shape. It is worth noting that this was a result of the communal reading of the Word of God. We were challenged at the completion of a marriage class to read through the Bible in fifty-two days and during that time, with prayer and fellowship, we witnessed ideas transform into actions and hesitant speculation into conviction. God's Word was brought to bear upon all four of us in a life-altering way.



WHY QUEBEC?

We don't often consider the possibility that there are Canadians living next-door who have yet to be reached with the Gospel, yet this is a striking reality for us. Quebec, in particular, is in dire need. The Quebecois are considered to be the most unreached people group in both North and South America with less than 1% claiming Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. The Scriptures are clear that Jesus is worthy of the utmost worship from all created things, and that all glory is His alone. He deserves the praise of every soul in Quebec. The Scriptures are also clear that Jesus is the only way of salvation; the only true satisfaction for those that thirst; the only life for dead hearts, and those that have not trusted in Him will enter judgement with the full weight of their sins placed on their own account. The fame of Jesus and the reality of hell: these realities form the “why” of our ministry in Quebec. This spurs us to pray, and in doing so, we are convinced that God is leading our families into this difficult mission field.

In light of Jesus' absolute authority, Christians are commanded to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey Christ (Mt. 28:18-20). Whether that brings us across the street or across the globe, all who call on the name of the Lord must heed this call. Our conviction of the Spirit's leading towards Quebec gives specificity to this call. The confirmation we've received from our local church elders, as well as that of the church leaders presently doing gospel ministry in Montreal and its surrounding areas, encourages us in our conviction that we are to go.

The past year has been a whirlwind of discerning next steps. A while back, we reached out to Acts 29 Canada, a branch of the Acts 29 church planting network, and have been working through some of their training material Foundations of Gospel Living, provided by their online platform “Academy in Context”. As it turns out, this material was created by the same pastors we have been in correspondence with in downtown Montreal as a tool to help foster gospel identity and missional DNA in their local churches. In God's providence, we had been working through this material for six months prior to any established partnership. All that to say, we've seen many open doors throughout the past year and God has faithfully led us through each one as we've chosen to trust in His wisdom and purposes.

NEXT STEPS:

So, two questions remain: where are we at now? And why are we sharing this with you? To answer the first, we are in preparation mode. Zach's work transfer to Mirabel was recently approved so he will be the first to move to Montreal in mid-May to begin his training. The rest of us will follow suit after he qualifies in his new position. In the meantime, 1) we are in the process of establishing a support network of individuals and local churches, 2) we are trying to absorb autant de français que possible and 3) we are establishing logistical plans for this mission's work. Cultural integration can only truly happen once we are in Montreal and that, along with spiritual formation, will be our primary focus at the outset. We have support in place to achieve this, but for those details, you'll have to wait for Vol. 2!

We are sharing this with you so that you would pray. We ask that you would pray with us and for us. Specifically, you can pray for supporters to come alongside us, and that we would be covered in prayer and surrounded by an abundance of wise counsel. Pray for our family to grow as a team and for potential conflicts to be worked out before we enter the bulk of this transition. Pray for our personal and spiritual growth as we finish up our time in Sioux Lookout, that we would continue to strive in the gospel work here and that we would be well equipped for the challenges of ministry in Quebec. Pray for our local church, that God would raise up faithful leaders to step into the roles we are currently serving in. Pray for Église 21, our local church in Montreal, for the ministry they are doing now and that the believers there would be strengthened and protected. Finally, but not exhaustively, pray for the people of Quebec, that God would move amongst them in power by His Spirit and draw people to Himself through the good news of the Gospel.

In Christ,

Aaron, Melissa, Zach, Olive, Sawyer, Weston & Sage



SOME STATS ABOUT QUEBEC:

- Sadly, in Quebec we find one of the highest suicide rates in Canada
- Abortion is socially approved and tax-funded
- The traditional family unit is virtually nonexistent
- Divorce rates are diminishing only because practically nobody gets married anymore (even so, the divorce rates are still high!)

These are indeed worldwide problems, but the people of Quebec ("the Quebecois") also have no safe place to reach out...

- **Less than 1%** of the population declares Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour
- They are the largest **unreached people group** in all of the Americas
- There is only **1 church for every 106,000 people**
- In Montreal alone, to reach a ratio of 1 church for every 30,000 people, **there would still need to be 50 new church plants**

Stats sourced from:
<https://aebec.qc.ca/mission-quebec/>