

#reachFlorida

...AND BEYOND

Maguire 2016 *state mission offering*



Montreal church planters make inroads among unreached people group

Montreal is a city of 3.5 million with less than one percent of its population knowing Jesus Christ as Savior. Located only an hour away from the United States border, these French-speaking Canadians, called Québécois, are the most unreached people group in North America.

The North American Mission Board has designated Montreal as a SEND City and has developed a strategy that follows the urban sections along the St. Lawrence River from Gatineau in the southwest all the way up to Quebec City in the northeast.

Florida Baptists have embraced the spiritual needs in this city by establishing a partnership with the churches located there. Funds from the Maguire State Mission Offering as it seeks to "Reach Florida and beyond" will underwrite the cost of the partnership.

"Our goal is to plant 20 churches in the city of Montreal and see God move and plant out from there across the province, the country and the world," said Chad Vandiver, Send City coordinator in Montreal.

And although a spiritual vacuum exists in the city, a group of young church planters have discovered how to reach millennials for Christ.

"God is doing something amazing," said Vandiver. "He is beginning a movement in Montreal."

DAVID POTHIER

Church planter David Pothier planted La Chapelle, (The Chapel), a French-speaking church in the heart of the beautiful city of Montreal in 2013. The church is one of the fastest growing churches in the core center of 2 million, reaching millennials who are receptive to the gospel message.

Montreal exists in a "post-Catholic background," said Pothier. "People completely rejected the church in the 1960s and now less than one percent are born again."

While it once was "very secular and a hard place to do ministry, in the past three years, we have seen hundreds of millennials come to Christ," he said.

"People are saved almost every week," he said, adding that 42 percent of the congregation were non-Christians before attending the church.

From meeting in a bar, the church has grown to 1,200 people in weekly attendance in two locations in past three years.

La Chapelle Rosemont was planted in 2013 with 900 in attendance, and La Chapelle Mile End, planted in 2015 and has reached 300 in attendance.

Because the growth they have experienced is unprecedented in Montreal, "managing this rapid growth is like controlled chaos," said Pothier. "We lack leaders to make disciples. We also lack financial resources, because members are young and do not have a lot of money."

DAVID MIRCK

David Mirck works alongside Pothier at La Chapelle in the Rosemont borough and Mile End borough. He tells of two young men who are examples of how God is at work to change lives.

Abdoul Bamba, a young man from the Ivory Coast, was a devout Muslim when he came to La Chapelle, "heard the gospel for the first time and gave his life to Christ after meeting the love of God," Mirck said.

Despite his family's initial rejection, the young man pressed on and is involved in gospel conversations regularly. Now married and with a son, the young family actively serves in the church, where Bamba leads a small group at their home.

Patrick Painchaud is a recovering drug addict who attended Alcoholics Anonymous meetings when he was invited by a friend to La Chapelle where he heard the claims of Christ for the first time.

"In his AA meetings they spoke about a superior power of some kind that was never clear (to him)," Mirck said. "But the moment he walked in to church he met God."

After several weeks, Painchaud gave his life to Christ, was baptized and "gave his testimony touching many." He now is a fervent soul winner, leading many to Christ.

CHRISTIAN LACHANCE

Christian Lachance planted Église Communautaire Mosaïque (Mosaic Community Church) in 2005 in downtown Quebec.

The evangelical church meets in different locations focused on that community, allowing its members to scatter across the city to revive the local church. "Each location shares the mission, vision, environment and values," said Lachance.

"Since starting the church, the congregation has added two church plants--one for students on the campus of University Laval; and a second one in a Catholic church building."

The congregation became the owner of the Catholic church in August and plans to use the facility as a multiplication center to train leaders, teams and pastors for the mission and new church plants.

"We are a church who multiplies its community actions, its presence and its influence around the greater Québec area," said Lachance "with a vision to plant seven churches in next 15 years, including a Spanish congregation."

JOSIAS LAPORTE

Josias Laporte, who has been serving as pastor of Le Contact Church in Repentigny, recently joined La Chapelle as a church planter intern.

While the church planter is still praying about where God wants him to plant a church, he has "a heart for Hochelaga Maisonneuve which is one of the poorest districts in Montreal," he said. "If we were to plant in that location, one of the main challenges our church could face is 'self-sustainability' because of the poor neighborhood."

Laporte asks Florida Baptists to pray for a clear confirmation of God on where they should plant the new church. "Pray as well that we can impact the Hassidic Jews, who will be our future neighbors in the community located near La Chapelle Mile End. We want to share the love of Jesus to them. Please pray for wisdom and discernment."