

# *Église réformée du Québec (ERQ)* **Reformed Church of Quebec**

## **Who are we?**

We are the *Église réformée du Québec* (ERQ), an association of French-speaking Reformed churches spread throughout the province of Quebec, Canada. We recognize the supreme authority of the infallible and inspired Word of God, and we accept the great classic creeds and the confessions of the Reformation as faithful Christian doctrine. The *Heidelberg Catechism* and the *Westminster Confession of Faith* have been officially adopted as our confessional statements. All our office bearers must subscribe to these confessions.

The ERQ was officially established on November 6<sup>th</sup> 1988, under a common confession and church order. Our nine founding local churches joined together, having been established by mission efforts of the Presbyterian Church of Canada (PCC), the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) and the Christian Reformed Church (CRC). While the PCC refused to support the formation of the ERQ, the PCA and the CRC recognized the need for a single and distinct French-speaking Reformed church in Canada and agreed to support the ERQ. Today we maintain missional and ecclesiastical ties with the PCA, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the United Reformed Churches and the Canadian Reformed Churches. We are a full member of NAPARC.

With our roots in the great Reformation of the 16th century and our sparse Huguenot heritage, we proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to the French-speaking people of Quebec. Often in Quebec, francophones are systematically considered to be Roman Catholics, and only anglophones are believed to be Protestants. In the ERQ it is now possible to be both francophone and Reformed. This vision for a single, French-speaking Reformed Church is one of the driving forces in the establishment and maintaining of the ERQ.

According to the ERQ church order, the basic principles of the church are: Jesus Christ is head of the church and no one else has the right to take this position; the Bible is the only rule for the faith and life of the church; other rules established by the church may be useful and important but must always be evaluated and, if necessary, reformed in the light of Scripture. Jesus Christ gathers and directs his church through the ministry of the elders and the ministers of the Word, while the ministry of the deacons makes the love of Christ visible and real to the needy. The elders and the minister of the Word of the congregation form the local councils (sessions or consistories). The ERQ synod, the assembly of delegated elders and ministers, meets three times a year.

Our weekly worship service on Sunday morning is centered on the preaching of the Word, the sacraments and prayers, including songs. The worship style, while more or less formal than other Reformed or Presbyterian churches, reflects our constant desire to do everything in good order, for the glory of God and for the edification of his people. Most congregations have Bible studies and prayers groups meeting on different days of the week.

Education is key to developing our congregations in maturity and stability. Since fewer Reformed resources exist in French, the ERQ congregations and office-bearers have been involved in producing educational material: Sunday School, Bible studies, catechism, evangelism, liturgical forms, public profession of faith, baptism, marriage, elder and deacon training, etc. There are however no Reformed Christian day schools for our children. Farel Reformed Theological Seminary (Montreal) seeks to train men for the ministry, new office bearers for serving the church, and members for their respective ministries in our churches.

The ERQ exists as a **mission church**. This is reflected in the small size of our congregations, the absence of elders, deacons or pastors in some churches, and the ongoing financial needs. Evangelism is essential to the ERQ mission. The French population in the Province of Quebec is a huge mission field because of the post-Roman Catholic culture which is very secular, individualistic and hedonistic. Disenchanted by the Roman Catholic Church, in particular because of its abuses, many individuals reject the church and Christian religion. Today, less than one per cent of French-speaking Quebecers identify with an Evangelical church. Consequently, each one of the ERQ churches is an active mission, bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ to those who have never heard or who have never experienced its transforming power.

The mission in Quebec is very challenging. The ERQ began with nine churches and mission posts. Today, even after attempts to plant other churches, only five congregations remain: Montréal, Repentigny, Quebec City, Levis and St-Georges de Beauce. Our total membership hovers around 350 souls, including covenant children. New converts are regularly received, even as a second and third generation is born into the church. On the other hand, too many of our members abandon the narrow way that leads to eternal life.

As the ERQ celebrates thirty years, we are thankful to our Lord for preserving a Reformed church amongst the French-speaking people of the province of Quebec. While the ERQ is numerically small, we rejoice that our Reformed witness reaches beyond the frontiers of our congregations. Growing numbers of believers in Quebec and several French-speaking countries benefit from our literature, our instruction and our witness.

*Please visit us: [www.erq.qc.ca](http://www.erq.qc.ca)*