



mission canada
BECAUSE WE MUST
PARCE QUE NOUS DEVONS

walking an
EMMAUS ROAD
journey with
HINDUS IN CANADA



Walking an EMMAUS ROAD journey with HINDUS in Canada©

has been produced by **The PAOC's Mission Canada Cultural Ministries Priority** to highlight the need for befriending and reaching cross-culturally in our nation. It is produced with the profound *agape*' love of Christ that motivates us to follow Jesus and be obedient to His command, "Go, make disciples of *all nations* (*'ta ethne'* – *every ethnicity/language group*)..." Matthew 28:19 (ESV). And we're motivated to take Emmaus Road journeys with those searching in the same way Jesus did in Luke 24, opening Scripture with compassion and grace explaining in all the Scriptures concerning Jesus so that their hearts burn within them!



Neighbours & Newcomers Network

is the ministry group within Mission Canada for those working in culturally sensitive areas wherein a protected online identity is advantageous not only for the worker but even more for those we are working with. **Neighbours & Newcomers Network (NNNetwork)** workers reach cross-culturally into the missional gaps in our nation of first-generation newcomers to Canada along with the following second and third generations. We deploy workers into the midst of our culturally diverse communities throughout Canada, reaching in religious groups who will otherwise not seek spiritual guidance from a local church. We seek to go be among, full of grace and truth, just like Jesus. **Scan this QR code to learn more:**



WHO IS NNNETWORK?

HINDUS

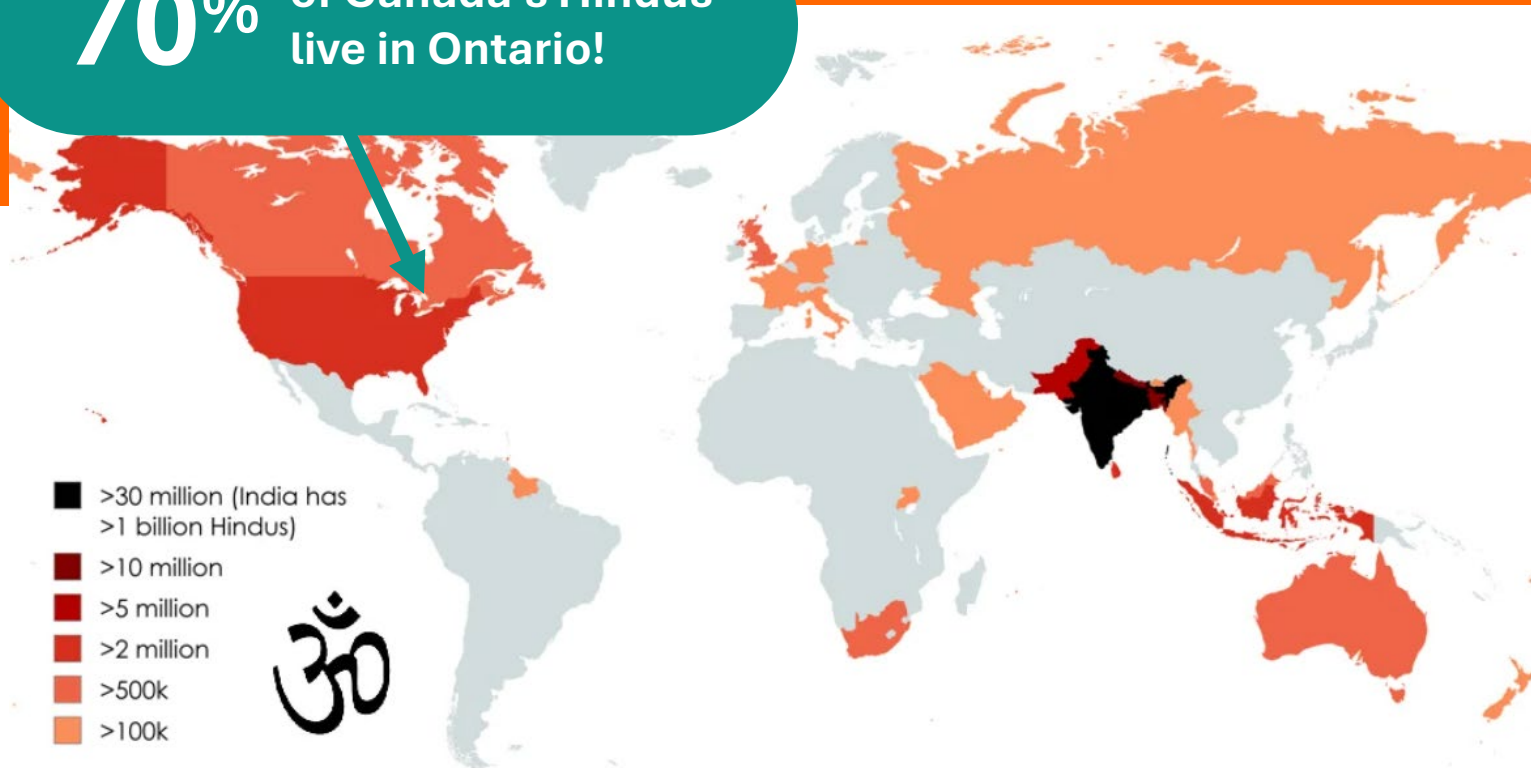
70% of Canada's Hindus live in Ontario!

FAST FACTS

FOUNDING: Hinduism gradually emerged over thousands of years on the Indian subcontinent, blending Vedic rituals, local traditions, and ascetic ideas, rather than being founded by a single person or event, and is often regarded as one of the world's oldest living religions.

HOLY TEXTS: Its scriptural basis is broad and layered, including the Vedas (esp. the Rig Veda) as the most ancient, followed by the Upanishads (philosophical teachings), the Bhagavad Gita (central devotional-philosophical text), and the Purāṇas and epics (Mahābhārata and Rāmāyaṇa) that spread theology and stories widely.

THEOLOGY AND PRACTICE: Central concepts such as Brahman (ultimate reality), ātman (the self), karma (action and consequence), samsāra (cycle of rebirth), and moksha (liberation), practiced through dharma-oriented living, rituals and worship (puja), yoga and meditation, and devotion (bhakti) to deities.



WHERE THEY LIVE - Worldwide & Canada:

India: about 1.1 billion Hindus, roughly 79% of the country.

Nepal: about 28.6 million, roughly 81% of the country.

Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka: Sizeable minorities.

Outside Asia, the largest communities are in the US, UK, Canada, Australia, and the UAE. Canada's more than 900,000 Hindus live primarily in Ontario (686,000), BC (82,000), AB (79,000), Quebec (50,000), and are found in all provinces and territories.

INTRODUCTION

*“The followers of the Hindu religion are proud to point out that there is no single human founder and no known date for the origin of Hinduism.... Hinduism is evolved ensemble of faiths and practices, and the evolution has not by any means ceased.... [H]istorical understanding (of it) cannot be a substitute for knowing Hinduism as lived by adherents today. **The diversity of Hindu beliefs and practices, however, makes a simple summary of practical Hinduism almost impossible....”***

“The assimilative power of Hinduism has often been noted, and indeed Hinduism cannot be understood without clearly grasping this fact. Ideas that are totally contradictory are held by different sects and persons, yet all subsumed under the Hindu umbrella. Hindu life continues with unresolved contradictions between sects that are oblivious to the neat patterns of the system makers.” H.L. Richard, *Hinduism*, 2007, pp. 7-8

So, here goes a short attempt at the impossible to provide a summary overview!

INTRODUCTORY SUMMARY OF HINDU CORE BELIEFS:

Hinduism emphasizes the **om** (all encompassing sound), **dharma** (ethics and duties), **artha** (prosperity), **kama** (desires), and **moksha** (liberation from rebirth). Key ideas include **karma** (actions' consequences), **samsara** (cycle of rebirth), and **atman** (eternal self), often pursued through paths like **bhakti** (devotion), **jnana** (knowledge), and **yoga**. Many Hindus view deities as manifestations of a **supreme reality (Brahman)**, allowing polytheistic, monotheistic, or non-dualistic interpretations.

CORE BELIEFS & SYMBOLS:



Om – the all-encompassing sound containing all things through which the universe was created and that is chanted in prayer, mantras and rituals.



Dharma – represented as a circle or wheel, it is the path, the duty, ethics and order of living rightly.



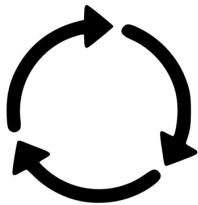
Artha – Prosperity, abundance and success: Frequently represented by images of Lakshmi (the goddess of wealth and prosperity) or by symbols e.g. coins, lotuses, or elephants.



Kama – the pursuit of love, desires and pleasure as a part of human life, often symbolized by the deity Kamadeva's flower-tipped arrows.



Moksha – liberation from the cycle of rebirth, often represented by an ascetic meditating, or the pilgrimage to the Ganges river.



Karma – the principle that actions in this present life shape future life results, represented here by arrows (actions and lives) affecting future lives and actions.



Samsara – the ongoing cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, commonly suggested by cyclical symbols such as the wheel of life (like the dharma) or endless interconnecting loops.



Atman – the eternal inner self or soul often symbolized by the lotus pointing to the pure, inner self rising from the mud and thus transcending impurity of the body.



Bhakti – loving devotion to God (worship), represented by devotees singing and dancing around deities like Krishna enticing worshippers with the flute as shown here.



Yoga – a path of discipline that unites body, mind, and spirit, most often depicted by figures in yoga meditative postures, or by Lord Shiva as Adi-Yogi, the primordial yogi seated in meditation.

Additional Hindu concepts, such as **JNANA** (spiritual knowledge that leads toward truth), and **BRAHMAN** (the Hindu ultimate reality behind all existence) are represented by other Hindu symbols already shown or are so metaphysical as to make simple graphic illustration a challenge.

Further, these are only some of the most common concepts and symbols in Hinduism, which is vast, complex, interconnected and overlapping. These simple illustrations have been provided to assist in the introductory learning process and are not exclusive, as many of these concepts are illustrated in various forms in keeping with the multiplex nature of Hinduism. Many further concepts and images will apply.

TRADITIONS, PRACTICES & FESTIVALS



The Hindu swastika is an ancient sacred symbol of well-being, good fortune, and the sun, used in Hindu (and other Asian) religions on homes, temples, and ritual items. In contrast it is not to be confused with the Nazi swastika, a corrupted symbol of hatred.

Hinduism features **four primary traditions**, each focused on differing primary deities but share the same Vedic roots and rituals like puja (worship):

- **Vaishnavism** is a major Hindu tradition that worships Vishnu and his incarnations (such as Krishna and Rama) as the supreme personal God.
- **Shaivism** is a major Hindu tradition that reveres Shiva as the supreme deity, emphasizing meditation, asceticism, and devotion to the lord of dissolution and transformation.
- **Shaktism** is a major Hindu tradition that worships the Goddess (Shakti or Devi, including forms like Durga and Kali) as the supreme divine power and source of all creation and energy.
- **Smartism** is a major Hindu tradition that accepts multiple deities (especially Vishnu, Shiva, Devi, Ganesha, and Surya) as equal forms of the one impersonal ultimate reality, often following the Advaita-inspired teachings of Adi Shankara.

Worship Practices vary widely in Hinduism, so much so that it has often been termed as a “worldview” rather than a “religion” in the formal sense. These are both private and public, not necessarily hidden but often practiced in full view, such as:

- **Puja**, the Hindu ritual of worship involving offerings, prayers, and honours to a deity’s image or symbol in a home shrine or temple.
- **Yajña** (sacrifices), a Vedic fire ritual in which offerings such as ghee, grains, or herbs are poured into a sacred fire while chanting mantras to maintain cosmic order and seek divine blessings.
- **Meditation**, a Hindu practice of quieting the mind to focus on the divine, a mantra, or the breath so as to realize the inner self and connect with the ultimate reality.
- **Yoga** is a Hindu discipline of physical postures, breath control, and mental focus that aims to unite the individual self with the universal divine and attain spiritual liberation.

Festivals are central to Hindu culture and social cohesion, such as: **Diwali** (light’s victory over evil), **Holi** (spring and love), **Ganesh Chaturthi** (elephant god), and **Maha Shivaratri** (Shiva's night) involve prayers, fasting, processions, and immersions. Innumerable other and local festivals pervade Hindu life and culture.

A DOCTRINAL COMPARISON & CONTRAST

Aspect	Hinduism Doctrine	Description	Christian Doctrine	Description
Ultimate reality	Brahman	Infinite, uncreated, all-pervading reality behind everything	One personal God (Trinity)	One God in three persons: Father, Son, Holy Spirit
View of God/gods	Many forms of the divine	One supreme reality expressed through many deities and images	One Creator God	Sole Creator distinct from creation, worthy of exclusive worship
Human nature	Atman	Each person has an eternal self that is ultimately one with or dependent on Brahman	Image of God	Humans created in God's image but fallen and in need of redemption
Problem of life	Ignorance and karma	Ignorance of true self and karmic bondage keep beings in rebirth	Sin and separation	Sin against God breaks relationship and brings guilt and death
Salvation / liberation	Moksha	Release from samsara (rebirth) and realization of union with or closeness to Brahman	Salvation in Christ	Forgiveness of sins and eternal life through Jesus Christ alone
Path to salvation	Many paths (margas)	Bhakti (devotion), jnana (knowledge), karma (right action), and yoga disciplines	Faith and grace	Saved by God's grace through faith in Christ, not by works
Afterlife	Samsara and rebirth	Ongoing cycle of births shaped by karma until moksha is attained	Resurrection and eternity	One earthly life, then resurrection and eternal destiny with or apart from God
Scripture	Vedas and many texts	Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, epics, and Puranas as layers of sacred authority	The Bible	Old and New Testaments as the unique, inspired written Word of God
Jesus Christ	Avatara or teacher	Often honoured as a divine incarnation or great teacher among many	Lord and Saviour	Unique God-man whose death and resurrection are central to salvation
Worship	Puja, temple and home	Ritual offerings to deities, images, and sacred powers in many forms	Prayer and sacraments	Worship of God through prayer, preaching, baptism, and the Lord's Supper



MOKSHA, ACHIEVING LIBERATION

Reincarnation, the nearly endless cycle of lives, deaths and rebirths (some traditional texts say 8.4 million!) is, to the Hindu, invoked by our ignorance of the divinity within each person and our error-filled living. Each must learn through trial and error, teaching and practice, to overcome our innate ways and achieve perfect fulfillment of the dharma (path, duties, ethical living). Only then is the atman (the soul) freed (moksha = liberated) from the cycles of samsara (rebirths).

Moksha, liberation from the cycles of **samsara**, is achieved entirely through one's human efforts of **puja** (worship), **yajña** (sacrifices), **meditation** and **yoga**, while avoiding things that incur **karma**: In simple terms, Hindus try to avoid thoughts and actions that harm others or themselves, since these create negative karma. **Thus, in Hinduism, moksha, or “salvation,” is via self-righteous works.**

KEY THINGS COMMONLY TAUGHT TO AVOID:

Violence and killing: Do not injure or kill living beings needlessly (especially murder and cruelty); ahimsa (non-violence) is central.

Lying and deceit: Avoid lying, cheating, and breaking promises, because they damage trust and create painful karmic reactions.

Stealing and exploitation: Do not take what is not yours or exploit people (financially, sexually, or in other ways).

Sexual misconduct: Avoid adultery, abuse, and exploitative sexual relationships, especially where there is a power imbalance.

Addiction and intoxication: Traditional texts warn against intoxication (drugs, alcohol) because it leads to loss of self-control and further bad actions.

Hatred, anger, greed: Cultivating anger, hatred, and greed is seen as a “gate to hell,” so one should let go of these before they drive harmful deeds.

Ignoring dharma (duty): Deliberately neglecting one's responsibilities to family, society, and God is said to generate binding karma.

A simple rule many Hindus would use: ***If an action violates honesty, non-violence, or responsibility, it will create bad karma and should be avoided.***

Walking an EMMAUS ROAD Journey with Hindus:

Believers in Jesus can engage Hindus through simple practices with profound impact. These are culturally relevant by being genuine, low/no pressure, life-sharing and loving. Your **active friendship is the bridge** for the good news of Jesus!

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS:

Find common ground between their beliefs and practices and ours. Appreciate their moral discipline, striving for peace and to detach from selfishness. Listen before sharing. Seek to understand their story, background, their beliefs and why they believe them.

Remember: While most Hindus are from South Asian backgrounds, many Western converts now are seeking spiritual fulfillment through Hinduism.

CULTURAL LEARNING:

Hindu cultures are often ancient with a rich heritage. If they are newcomers or have a recent immigrant personal history, ask them and learn on your own of their national and ethnic background. The more you know, the more you can understand, appreciate and adapt.

SHARE COMPASSIONATELY, PATIENTLY, CONSISTENTLY:

First, pray. Depend on the Holy Spirit rather than persuasive techniques or high-pressure apologetics. Listen deeply and respectfully, and then when sharing, use relational, story-based sharing such as parables and the testimony of your own faith journey.

Explain concepts patiently avoiding theological jargon. Emphasize God's love, grace, forgiveness, and personal relationship, even though this will challenge their Hindu beliefs. Let the Holy Spirit use your life witness and words. Highlight Jesus as a compassionate teacher who goes beyond self-effort to offer salvation. Emphasize hope and joy over fear and guilt.

Pitfalls to avoid: Don't criticize or mock Hindu beliefs and practices. Don't argue philosophy—keep the focus on Jesus. Don't assume all Hindus think alike as there are many versions and variations. Don't push toward conversion; relationships and the Holy Spirit's work takes time.



And, most of all, **PRAYER!**



Join us in prayer for Hindus and all newcomers to Canada, fulfilling the Father's Heart and Jesus' statement, **"My house shall be called a house of prayer for all [ethnos = nations, peoples, ethnicities],"** Mark 11:17, Isaiah 56:7 (ESV). Salvation is a work of the Holy Spirit, and both prayer and witness are our responsibilities to His commissioning of each of us as His imitators.

10 Intercessory prayer points for HINDUS according to their beliefs, plus 1 more!

1

ONE GOD INSTEAD OF MANY GODS:

Father, open the hearts of Hindus to recognize that You alone are God, before and after all. We ask that their eyes will be turned from hundreds of gods to You, the one true God - the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who alone is worthy of worship.

- Deuteronomy 4:35 & 6:4; Isaiah 44:6 ; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6

2

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP INSTEAD OF RITUAL-DRIVEN RELIGION

Lord, turn Hindus from religion built on ritual and fear to a living relationship with You as Father. We pray that many will discover that access to God is not bought by ceremonies but received by faith in Jesus Christ alone. May they come to worship You as Father, by grace through faith in Jesus and His work, not their own righteous deeds.

- John 1:12; Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 5:1-2

3

GRACE INSTEAD OF KARMA AND SELF-EFFORT

Father, uproot the belief that people must earn their way to You through karma-driven self-effort. We pray that millions of Hindus worldwide and more than 2 million in Canada will embrace the gospel: that You have already paid for their sins in Christ, and that they receive forgiveness as a free gift in Jesus Christ.

- Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:4-7; Romans 3:23-24

4

MOKSHA REPLACED BY ETERNAL LIFE IN CHRIST

Lord, show Hindus that true liberation is not losing identity in an impersonal void, but gaining eternal life in You. We ask that they will see Jesus as the way to abundant life now and resurrection life forever, not endless cycles of rebirth.

- John 17:3; 1 John 5:11–12; 1 Corinthians 15:20–22

5

JESUS CHRIST IS THE ONLY MEDIATOR, NOT MULTIPLE PATHS

Father, break the assumption that Jesus is just one god on the way, and that “all paths lead to god.” We pray that Hindus will see Him as the only Saviour and Mediator, and that they will trust in Jesus alone for salvation.

- John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:5–6

6

CLEANSING FROM SIN INSTEAD OF RITUAL PURIFICATION

Lord, show Hindus that no river bath or temple ritual can cleanse a guilty conscience. We ask that they will find true purification from sin in the blood of Jesus and the new heart He gives by the Spirit, rather than external rituals of fasting, bathing, etc.

- 1 John 1:7; Hebrews 9:14; 10:14

7

DIGNITY OF THE PERSON INSTEAD OF CASTE HIERARCHY

Father, break the chains of caste-based shame and pride. We ask that every Hindu, high-caste or low, will see themselves as loved by You and called to dignity in Christ. For in Christ, we are all made equal in Him, regardless of our background!

- Genesis 1:27; Galatians 3:28; James 2:1–9

8

SCRIPTURE AS FINAL AUTHORITY INSTEAD OF MANY SACRED TEXTS

Lord, help Hindus see your Scriptures as Your Word and the final authority. We pray that they will be open to the Bible as Your breathed-out Word and find in its pages the truth that leads to the good news of Jesus Christ.

- 2 Timothy 3:16–17; 2 Peter 1:20–21

9

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION INSTEAD OF UNCERTAINTY

Father, lift Hindus out of the anxiety of “Have I done enough?” We ask that they will hear Your promise that if they are in Christ, they have eternal life and no condemnation, and that they will rest in that assurance.

- John 5:24; 1 John 5:13; Romans 8:1



10

HOLINESS BY THE SPIRIT INSTEAD OF SELF-DISCIPLINE ALONE

Lord, show our Hindu friends, neighbours and coworkers that self-effort alone cannot make them holy. We humbly ask that they will receive Your Spirit of salvation, who gives new power to love, forgive, and walk in obedience, not out of fear, but out of love for You.

- Galatians 5:16–25; Titus 2:11–14



11

MOST HINDUS IN THE WORLD (50-75%) HAVE NEVER HAD A CHRISTIAN FRIEND. In Canada, that doesn't have to be the case. God has brought Hindu immigrants to Canada for His purpose – to encounter Him, through us (cf. Acts 17:26-27).

Christ's command: *"The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the Harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. Go your way; behold, I am sending you out..."* Luke 10:2 ESV.

Let us pray for ourselves, all pastors, churches, and believers in Canada will answer the Father's call to go out as His labourers, intentionally befriending Hindus in Canada, lovingly and patiently walking an Emmaus Road journey with them, sharing in both word and deed the liberating love and truth of Jesus Christ! Amen.



An Emmaus Road Story

Navith and Shuchi* were born in India in Hindu families. One of Shuchi's uncles, though, was a Christian. He used to often share the message of Christian faith in many ways. But it was one summer holiday when Shuchi went daily for a week of special church services that

really touched her heart. Though years ago, she still distinctly recalls the sense of reverential fear at being in the church building. Yet she was also so happy at being in the building with people worshipping the Christian God.

After returning home and returning to practicing Hindu puja with her parents at home and in the temple, she didn't feel the same sense of happiness as she had when in the church building. She knew something was different. Perhaps this was why Shuchi often sought out Christian friends as she grew up.

In her grade 12 and college residential program a Christian friend invited her to a Bible study where she loved the worship and grew in Biblical knowledge. Then, away in university and attending church services, she finally made the decision: **The LORD is my God, and Jesus my Saviour!** But out of fear and respect, she hid this from her parents.

Navith knew Shuchi's uncle and heard about Christian faith from him, too. And they were arranged to be married. His mom had converted from Hinduism to worshipping Jesus, but his dad was stubbornly angry at her for doing so.

It was not a peace-filled home. "If born Hindu, you're Hindu!" he thought, hardened against anyone changing faiths.

After moving to Canada, Navith sometimes drove Shuchi to worship services in Brampton, Ontario. Sometimes he'd go in with her. He loved the worship which was so moving. Slowly the meaning of the lyrics and the sermons began to speak to him. A friend started a Bible study with him and four others who were not yet believers. **With time and patient teaching, Navith came to see the truth of the one true God and creator, revealed in Jesus alone, and decided to follow Him and none other.** Today he serves in his local church and on the Board.

Navith and Suchi (pseudonyms for them in this real Canadian story) is an example of a small but growing number of Hindu background believers in Jesus in Canada. **Hindus come to faith because a Christian individual, couple or even local church body have graciously, patiently walked an Emmaus Road Journey with them.**

Will you walk this road by the leading of the Holy Spirit with Hindus in your life?



Thank you for agreeing in prayer!

Jesus grants us this powerful promise: *“...if any of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven,”* Matthew 18:19 (ESV). Amazing!

We invite and encourage you to continue using these prayer points all year long. And share them with friends, too. **To share this Emmaus Road Journey with others, direct your friends here:**



EMMAUS ROAD JOURNEYS

Want to know more about how to better reach cross-culturally right here in Canada?

That's what Mission Canada is here for. Contact us at: missioncanada@paoc.org



Is God calling **YOU** to cross-cultural outreach in Canada?

Mission Canada deploys those called of God as workers to be His witnesses in the gaps of Canada. Our five missional gaps in Canada are: **Cultural, Urban, Indigenous, Francophone & Quebec,** and **NextGen (Campus, Youth and Children)**. To learn more about our missional work in Canada and what it takes to become a deployed worker with Mission Canada, scan this QR code.

We look forward to engaging with you!



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Will you make a
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in this project and ministry?

Your gifts empower:

- The national call to prayer, equip and deploy God's people to reaching cross-culturally in Canada
- The deployment of new cross-cultural workers in Canada
- And the production of more materials like this to raise awareness, share vision, stimulate prayer, and equip God's people

To invest, give to NNNetwork-National: Scan the QR code or visit:

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