

Spiritual Climate

Portuguese society is overwhelmingly Roman Catholic. About 80% of the population consider themselves Roman Catholic, but very few would attend Mass on a regular basis. This varies across the nation: the north is strikingly more religious than the urban center of Lisbon, and the southern Algarve region even less than Lisbon.

The Evangelical church in Portugal has existed for a number of years, despite opposition in the past from the Catholic Church. Today there is little explicit opposition to evangelicals, but much misunderstanding and distrust of evangelicals. Evangelicals are often placed in the same category along with Jehovah Witnesses and Mormons. There is no understanding of the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century, and due to Portugal's Inquisition from the sixteenth to early nineteenth century, Protestantism never reached Portugal.

Evangelical churches tend to be small, especially in country areas. Yet in the last few years there has been an effort to unite churches, and focus on church planting with the Portugal 2015 vision of church planting.

There is a spiritual interest in people, but little commitment to any organized religion. Many of the younger generation are more open to new ideas, than their more conservative parents and grandparents, but also the youth are following global trends as quickly as many of the youth in other European and Western societies. Recently the rise of materialism, and questioning of the church, has lead to many people being disillusioned with the Roman Church, and indeed, any formal organized religion.

The Portuguese are also shaped by their commitment to family. Family units are very strong and the heart of Portuguese society. The Portuguese, due to their recent past (the fascist dictatorship, 1930's – 1974), can be somewhat closed to strangers and external ideas. But once these barriers are overcome they are very friendly, but it takes time to gain trust.

Religion:

- Catholic - 74.9%
- Unaffiliated - 14.7%
- Non-Religious - 5.0%
- Independent - 2.2%
- Protestant - 1.3%
- Marginal - 1.2%

Source: Operation World 2001

Bible Schools National Organization:

- Portuguese Bible Institute
- Baptist Theological Seminary
- Assemblies of God Seminary

- Portuguese Evangelical Alliance
(Aliança Evangélica Portuguesa)