



Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2006-96

Ottawa, 27 March 2006

Association d'églises baptistes réformées du Québec
Québec, Quebec

Application 2005-0009-2
Public Hearing in the National Capital Region
14 November 2005

Religious FM station in Québec

*The Commission **denies** the application by the Association d'églises baptistes réformées du Québec for a broadcasting licence to operate a French-language commercial religious FM radio station in Québec.*

The application

1. The Commission received an application by the Association d'églises baptistes réformées du Québec (AEBRQ) for a broadcasting licence to operate a French-language commercial religious FM radio programming undertaking in Québec. The AEBRQ is a duly incorporated corporation under the *Religious Corporations Act* and is recognized as a charity.
2. The proposed station would operate at 96.9 MHz (channel 245LP) with an effective radiated power of 13 watts.
3. The applicant proposed to broadcast 70 hours of programming per week. The majority of the programming would be locally produced. The station would primarily target practising members of the local Christian community, as well as individuals seeking to find spiritual meaning for their lives.
4. The applicant proposed to devote 50% of all musical selections broadcast to selections from subcategory 31 (concert), 30% to selections from subcategory 24 (easy listening), 10% to selections from subcategory 34 (jazz and blues), and 10% to selections from subcategory 35 (non-classic religious), as defined in *Revised Content Categories and Subcategories for Radio*, Public Notice CRTC 2000-14, 28 January 2000.

5. The station would broadcast 11 hours and 22 minutes per week of religious spoken word programming, as defined in *Religious Broadcasting Policy*, Public Notice CRTC 1993-78, 3 June 1993 (the Religious Broadcasting Policy). The applicant specified that the religious programming would include 1 hour and 45 minutes of balance programs, that is, programs that would present differing views on religion and matters of public concern. With respect to balance programs, the applicant indicated that it would broadcast a program during which a pastor who is part of the evangelical movement would respond to questions posed by the audience. The applicant indicated, however, that it would also invite members of other religious denominations to discuss, on the air, their own beliefs and religious practices.

Intervention

6. The Commission received one comment regarding this application from the Association québécoise de l'industrie du disque, du spectacle et de la vidéo (ADISQ). ADISQ underlined the importance of the commitments that the applicant must make with respect to Canadian content, French-language vocal music and Canadian talent development. The applicant did not respond to ADISQ's comment.

Commission's analysis and determination

7. The Commission has considered the application in light of the provisions of the Religious Broadcasting Policy, given that the applicant proposed to operate a religious radio station.
8. Section 3(1)(i) of the *Broadcasting Act* states that programming provided by the Canadian broadcasting system should be varied, balanced, and where possible, provide a reasonable opportunity for the public to be exposed to the expression of differing views on matters of public concern.
9. The Commission stipulated in the Religious Broadcasting Policy that it remains a principal tenet of the Canadian broadcasting system that licensees should provide balance on matters of public concern. In the Commission's view, licensees that broadcast religious programming have an obligation to provide an opportunity for the public to be exposed to differing views on matters of general public concern, and at the same time, to expose listeners to different points of view on religion itself. Accordingly, the Commission expects applicants to demonstrate how they intend to ensure balance in their programming, and how they would respond to complaints from the public about balance in programming.
10. In this application, the Commission notes that the station would target a primarily Christian audience. Furthermore, the Commission notes that there is a preponderance of religious programming in the proposed program schedule, especially with respect to spoken word programs.

11. To comply with the balance programming requirement of the Religious Broadcasting Policy, the AEBRQ proposed a total of 1 hour and 45 minutes of programming per week. However, the applicant did not provide sufficient details on how it would ensure balance in its programming.
12. Consequently, the Commission is not convinced that the programming proposed by the applicant would ensure balanced multi-faith representation, or that the programming would permit the station's listeners to be exposed to differing views on matters of public concern, as provided under the Religious Broadcasting Policy.
13. In the light of the foregoing, the Commission **denies** the application by the Association d'églises baptistes réformées du Québec for a broadcasting licence to operate a French-language commercial religious FM radio programming undertaking in Québec.

Secretary General

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