



#### QUICK FACTS:

**Place of Origin:**  
Andes Mountains  
(Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia)

**Location in New York City Metro:**  
Queens (around Roosevelt Avenue in Jackson Heights and Corona, around Wyckoff Ave in Ridgewood); Spring Valley, NY; Newark, NJ; Bronx (Morrisania, particularly along Westchester Avenue)

**Population in New York City Metro:** 10,000  
(Community Estimate)

**Primary Religion:**  
Christianity

**Religious Subdivision:**  
Syncretized Catholicism with Inca traditional beliefs and rituals

**Status of Christian Witness:** Greater than or equal to 10% Evangelical Christian.

**Primary Languages:**  
Spanish and/or Quichua

**Registry of Peoples Code:**  
107703 (Otavalo), 101871 (Canari)

**Significant Notes:**  
Due to racism that Quichua experienced in their home countries, many hide their identity even in the U.S.

# Quichua in New York and New Jersey

ALL PEOPLES INITIATIVE

LAST UPDATED: 8/2007

The Quichua, or Quechua, Indians from the Andes Mountains in South America, are the largest remaining American Indian group in the world. They primarily live in Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, Argentina, Chile, and Colombia. Within the larger Quechua affinity are multiple Quichua people groups that speak their own unique dialect. While many Quichua speak the indigenous language as their primary language, others primarily speak Spanish. The majority of Quichua in the New York City metro area have come from the Otavalo and Canari highlands of Ecuador, although Quichua have also come from other parts of Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, and elsewhere in the Andes mountains.

## When Did They Come to New York?

Quichua from Otavalo started making their way to New York in the late 1970s and early 1980s due to economic problems in their homeland. Their occupation during this time was primarily in selling clothes from Ecuador and in other small import/export trade between the two countries. The population has grown steadily until today, when most Otavalo Quichua come to specialize in a particular construction industry, such as siding, roofing, cement, etc. Shortly after the Otavalo Quichua carved a niche for themselves in the New York economy, Quichua from the Canari highlands of Ecuador came to follow suit in the construction business. Most Quichua in the New York metro area come from either Otavalo or Canari.



Photo from <http://www.byhisgrace.cc/quechua/>

## Where Do They Live?

The majority of Quichua are from Otavalo, and are centered in the Jackson Heights, Corona, and Ridgewood areas of Queens. They can also be found in the Morrisania area of the Bronx, Newark, NJ, and in Rockland County, NY, particularly in Spring Valley. While living in the same places as the Otavalo Quichua, the Canari Quichua are particularly centered in Spring Valley, where their population is estimated at 1,500.

## What Do They Believe?

Quichua people almost exclusively identify themselves as Christians. Almost 90% of these, however, are Catholics who have syncretized traditional Inca beliefs and rituals with the practices of Catholicism. Many Quichua have a strong sense of the reality of the supernatural world, and believe that what occurs in that dimension explains what happens in the natural world. Furthermore, all things in the natural world are believed to have an animating force called *samai*.

## What Are Their Lives Like?

The Quichua in New York and New Jersey work incredibly hard at their construction jobs. The Quichua communities in Newark, Spring Valley, and the Bronx came into being because these areas were more conveniently located for specific construction jobs. Although spare time is hard to come by, the Quichua often gather in large numbers for Ecuadorian holidays and celebrations, and for church celebrations and anniversaries. Their primary language varies between Spanish and Quichua, although there is an attempt to revive the use of Quichua. Those who do speak Quichua as their primary language will often only speak Spanish in public, as their people are commonly looked down upon by other Ecuadorians and South Americans.

## How Can I Pray?

∞ There are several Quichua evangelical churches in the New York Metro area. Pray that they would be effective in reaching their community with the Gospel.

∞ The Quichua are often looked down upon by Hispanics from Central and South America. Pray that the Quichua would love these people with a Christ-like love, persuading them to investigate the Source of such humility.