

# Chapter 43

# USA

---



## INTRODUCTION

It all started for OAC-USA in Illinois on September 22, 1956. On this day, Jim Duffecy and his team conducted the first open-air meeting in this country on the corner of Quincy and State Street in downtown Chicago. We were eventually incorporated in Illinois in 1958 and, by God's grace, have continued our open-air ministry non-stop since that time. In the early days of our history in the USA, the headquarters was located in Wheaton, Illinois. Olga Kruck was our first USA office worker, coming on staff in 1959. The Lord used Olga for nearly three decades as a faithful servant carrying out various administrative responsibilities. Olga was beloved by many donors who received a personalized, hand-written ministry update note from her with each contribution sent to our Wheaton office. In 2017, just one month short of turning 100, Olga was promoted to heaven.



**OLGA KRUCK**

Jim Duffecy recorded many details regarding the early part of our USA history in "The Truceless Warfare Advances" book. He included a general mention of some of our staff up through 1983 which included Tammy Bellinger (who would marry Chip Welton), Eric and Diane Briscoe, Bron and Nessie Carlisle, Ralph and Emile Coglianese, Al and Francis Collins, John and Sue Cutlip, Wes and Belva Dunn, Bob and Deidra Ewerth, Sam Frey (who would marry Sherry Siler), Janet Fureman, Lisa Gruthusen (who would marry Philip Lundstrom), Russ Hodder, Fred and Barb Kornis, Olga Kruck, Orlando and Stephanie Lafica, Ed and Cathy Lowe, Tom and Rita Major, Mike and Cindy Malszycki, George and Betty Naggy, Chuck and Fran Phelps, John and Pearl Prince, Randy and Judy Riddle, Mary Rosier, Lou and Kim Sari, Chris and Barb Schroeder, Jim and Koline Sherwood, Sherry Siler (who married Sam Frey), Art and Peggy Williams, plus David

and Elaine Wilson. What follows in this introduction section is a bit of overlap with the history to provide additional details about a few of our staff who joined before 1983 but continued in active roles beyond that era, some of whom are still ministering today!



***THE CARLISLE FAMILY***

Bron and Nessie Carlisle came on staff in 1952 in New Zealand. God blessed them with two daughters, Averill and Adrienne. The Carlisles came to the USA and were part of the Chicago work in the late 1950s. Bron was an accomplished accordion player, and together, he and Nessie had quite a wonderful singing ministry. Using Chicago as their base, they conducted campaigns in various states in America, using their music, open-air, and pulpit supply talents. In 1961, Bron transitioned

to a ministry with Columbia Bible College in South Carolina as their director of evangelism. In this role, many individuals were educated about the ministry of Open Air Campaigners, and some of them went on to join our staff, including David Fanstone and Randy Riddle. In 1964, Bron joined David Fanstone and Jim Duffecy to conduct open-air outreach at the World's Fair in New York City. The fair included exhibitions, activities, performances, films, art, and food presented by 80 nations, 24 US states, and nearly 350 American companies, making it an excellent setting for reaching many people with the gospel. During Bron's ministry with us as USA staff in the 1980s, he actively represented us at conferences in local churches and Bible colleges. Bron was promoted to heaven in 1992 at the age of 78.

Art Williams first heard about us in the fall of 1960, while a student at Tennessee Temple University. He met with us a few times to learn about the work, but it wasn't until he spent two weeks on a crusade with Jim Duffecy in New Jersey that he was convinced of God's call on his life to join us. He and his wife, Peggy, joined OAC in 1961. Art ministered in various roles through the years, including that of an evangelist, New York-New Jersey director and national director. In 1991, he left OAC and, together with Jack Kreidler, established the Bible Open Air Mission (BOAM), headquartered in New Jersey.



***ART & PEGGY WILLIAMS***



***BELVA & WES DUNN***

Highly talented individuals, Wes and Belva Dunn, were professional musicians in California. They had their own TV program called "The Singing Strings," which broadcast on a local station in the Los Angeles (LA) area. Belva was a world-champion steel guitarist, the daughter of Delbert Dickerson, who manufactured steel guitars. The Dunns were also tennis pros and owned a couple of tennis shops. In addition, they umpired professional tennis matches, and knew some of the day's top players, such as Rod Laver and Billie Jean

King. In 1960, they were involved in a terrible automobile accident; both of them were seriously injured, and Belva nearly died. She never fully recovered from the accident and remained somewhat crippled for the rest of her life. Wes and Belva trusted Christ in separate hospitals during this time, to their mutual surprise!

After they left the hospital, they decided to take some vacation time. During their travels, they stopped to take in the LA County Fair. While there, they ran into an OAC team led by Jim Duffecy! When Jim learned they were musicians, he asked if they would stay and help out; they never went on their vacation! In time, Wes and Belva joined our staff, working with Don Avilano in the newly formed LA branch, eventually joined by Ed and Joyce Martin. When Ed left the OAC ministry, Wes succeeded him as area director in 1971.

Wes and Belva's ministry consisted primarily of weekend ministry in downtown Los Angeles on Friday nights and Hollywood Boulevard on Saturday nights. They also conducted holiday ministry and led evangelism in Mexicali, Mexico, in conjunction with a local church.



***HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD MEETING***

As a Biola student, Russ Hodder joined Wes and Belva in their ministry in 1970. Weekdays consisted of noon-hour meetings in downtown LA parks and children's ministry in housing projects in the afternoons. Russ joined full time after graduating from seminary in 1977.

Wes stepped down as director in 1982 but still wanted to be involved in the Hollywood ministry. Russ succeeded Wes as the branch director. OAC co-worker Orlando Lafica scouted some great beach and pier sites, so with the approval of our national director, Art Williams, they decided to move the weekend ministry to the piers. Belva was promoted to heaven in 1993, and Wes in 2000.

Ed Martin is a native of California and surrendered his life to Christ in the parking lot of Knott's Berry Farm in Buena Park. He holds an M.A. in Biblical Counseling from



***JOYCE & ED MARTIN***

Grace Theological Seminary and earned his B.A. in Christian Education and Bible from Biola University. Ed learned about OAC when Don Avilano, Jim Duffecy, and Lou Finney spoke at Biola College and his local church in 1960. Ed and his wife, Joyce, came on staff in 1963 and served with us for ten years. Ed became our Chicago area director and then our Los Angeles director. After serving with us, he was a Harbor Chaplain to boaters and seamen along the Southern California coast and owned his own business there.

Ed became a licensed professional counselor, accredited by the State of Tennessee. In 1984, God led Ed to serve as the executive director and lead counselor of the Tri-Cities Center for Christian Counseling in the Kingsport area, where they currently live. He also served as a member of the American Association of Christian Counselors and as a recommended counselor for Dr. Dobson's Focus on the Family ministry.

Through the years, Ed has served on our national board of directors. His background as a former OAC staff member and branch director was a great help in providing us with insightful leadership and godly counsel.

David and Elaine Wilson came to Baltimore in 1970 and worked in the Baltimore-Washington branch under Larry Bateman, who left in 1972. David then became the director of Baltimore and was joined in 1976 by Fred and Barb Kornis. In 1979, the Wilsons moved overseas for a year of sabbatical ministry, during which time Fred served as acting director. After returning from their sabbatical year in 1980, God gave David and Elaine a vision for international evangelism. As a result, the OAC Overseas Ministries Division was established under David's leadership. Eventually, Overseas Ministries would become a separate organization, although all of the administration, including bookkeeping, would continue through the OAC-USA office (see chapter 47 on Worldwide Proclamation for more details).



***ELAINE & DAVID WILSON***

## **FUN FACT #1**

**Former staff member and Los Angeles Director Ed Martin held a pilot's license and flew a small turboprop airplane. Worldwide Proclamation founder David Wilson had a commercial pilot's license and was a Captain with Air New Zealand before joining OAC.**



***BETTY & GEORGE NAGGY***

George and Betty Naggy were radically committed to Christ. As active members in their local church, they were eager to serve the Lord in any way He desired. Betty reported that George was convinced of God's call to preach in the open air early in his Christian walk. There was a time when George quit working at Dupont and attended Bible college. He participated in the Sketchboard Evangelism Training (SET) at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago in August 1965. In October of that same year, George was traveling to Upstate New York to speak at a church. Passing through New York City, God touched his heart with a burden for the lost of that great metropolis. He and Betty moved from

Delaware to Long Island in January 1966 to start his ministry of evangelism. George and Betty joined OAC in 1970 and ministered in the greater New York City area for the next 37 years. George and his team held thousands of open-air meetings for children, teens, and adults in all five boroughs of New York City. George worked with OAC staff, local church volunteers, and folks from other missions.

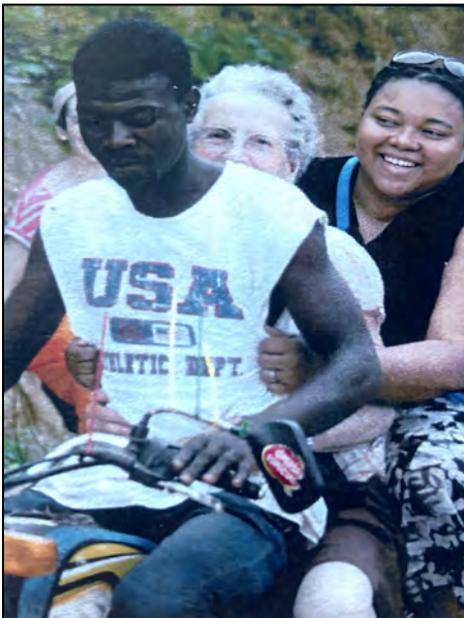
Some of his OAC co-workers through the years included Dave and Joy Braun, Sam and Sherry Frey, Chris and Barb Schroeder, Larry Tiss, Phil and Rose Foglia, Ron and Michal Stoesz, Chuck and Linda Williams, Ron Bamford, Art and Peggy Williams, and Ken Fisher. To this day, Ken continues to be passionate about distributing gospel tracts. As of this writing, he has personally handed out over 700,000!. In addition to the former staff just mentioned, there were several faithful volunteers and folks from different ministries who also worked consistently with George, including Scottie Teague and Bruce Hoppie.

George desired to preach in the open air as long as God gave him strength, and he did so until he was 80. His desire to be in the open air remained strong, but the years of outdoor ministry in the concrete jungle had taken a toll on his body. In 2007, he and Betty moved back to Delaware, and in 2008, at 81, George was promoted to heaven.



*GEORGE MINISTERING IN NEW YORK CITY*

After George's homegoing, Betty lived with her daughter, but was certainly not ready to sit in a rocking chair! She had an unstoppable spirit, love for the Lord, and enthusiasm for life. She ramped up involvement in her local church, remarried, and created a bucket list of things she wanted to do, including a mission trip to Haiti and skydiving. After



*BETTY ON THE MOVE IN HAITI*

briefly considering bungee jumping, she wisely decided not to do that! Betty continued to love OAC and witnessed to the lost after George was gone. On one occasion, our Baltimore team worked with a group of young people out of their local church. They called their youth outreach the Mission Possible Team and conducted ministry in the Ocean City, Maryland, area. Betty and her daughter, Donna, showed up to help this youth group just after parasailing at 800 feet, which impacted the entire team. Having a retired OAC missionary like Betty join the group, someone who had ministered in New York City for twice as long as these young people had lived, was a powerful testimony. Her love for the Lord and sense of adventure were contagious. Betty was promoted to heaven in 2022.



## Frontline Story

The Ocean City location mentioned above has been a great place to hold open-air meetings through the years for many of our OAC staff. It is encouraging to hear testimonies of how God has used this location to touch the lives of many individuals. Here are a couple of examples.

In 1973, a young man named Hunter, a dropout from junior high school and hippie on drugs, was walking along the boardwalk in Ocean City, Maryland. In his pocket was a loaded .32 pistol. His wife was divorcing him, and his world was crumbling. At the end of the boardwalk, he planned to walk out on the rocks, shoot himself, fall into the water, and disappear forever. As he was walking to his final destination, his eye caught something glowing on the beach, and he wondered if it was real. Coming out onto the sand, he saw an OAC sketchboard with a blacklight illuminating the message. Joining the crowd, he listened as the good news of the gospel was being proclaimed. After the message, he was the first to respond and sat down on the beach, where he prayed to trust Christ. God worked mightily in his life from that point, and a year later, he was back at that same spot on the beach, this time as the preacher, and people were responding to Christ! The Lord used him, and one by one, lives were transformed, including atheists, homosexuals, and those contemplating suicide. Hunter attended Bible school for a year, completed a psychology degree, and has since served for many years as a Christian counselor at a hospital. The Lord has done an outstanding work in his life, given him a good wife, loving family, and a tremendous ministry of pointing people to Christ.

A second example of how God has used the Ocean City location took place in 1975. A lady named Linda shared with us how, in the summer of that year, she was with a group of friends who decided to mock some of our open-air workers who were sharing Christ at the shore one evening. However, God had other plans: one of the team members shared the gospel with Linda, she knelt on the beach and prayed to receive Christ. Linda recently told us that she wanted to express a special thanks from the depths of her heart because our workers were faithful to God that night. She told us, "I have obtained a degree in Christian missions, married a godly man, and served the Lord in Lebanon and Canada with my dear husband. We have seen people saved, and much seed has been sown. All my children have made professions of faith."





**DEIDRA & BOB EWERTH**

Bob Ewerth was introduced to Open Air Campaigners through his Christian Service assignment at Washington Bible College in 1973. In 1976, he married Deidra, and in that same year, they joined the Baltimore-Washington branch of OAC. Over the years, he has been involved as an evangelist, primarily here in the States but occasionally overseas. In 1979, Dennis and Sue King joined the Baltimore-Washington branch and, in 1980, teamed up with Bob and Deidra when they transitioned from Baltimore to Philadelphia. The Philadelphia branch office began in Bob's house, then the Salvation Army provided him with some space in their building, eventually the Roxborough

Baptist church offered an ideal location, which not only had office space but also areas for storage and equipment prep. Meeting rooms at the Roxborough location were frequently used to host local and national staff meetings. Bob's father and mother (Robert, Sr., and Betty) lived close to the office and were a great help to Bob and his staff, often coming into the office and helping with various branch projects. Over time, the Philadelphia staff also included Eric and Diane Briscoe, Karen Boorse, Joe and Wendy Toy, David and Joy Braun, and Dan Henry. Dan joined the staff in the mid-1980s. He was born and raised in Alaska, went to Bible college there, married a gal named Donna, and was part of the Philadelphia work for a short time before moving on.

Volunteers and missionaries from like-minded organizations have also been an important part of the Philadelphia branch through the years. A prime example is our brother in the Lord and good friend, Dr. Tony Rizzo from Youth Action Ministries. We have partnered together on a regular basis, conducting joint evangelism outreach in the Kensington and surrounding areas of Philadelphia for many years.

During his time with OAC, Bob has served as the Philadelphia branch director, national management team member, and on our national board of directors. As the Philadelphia director, the Lord brought him godly counsel from committee members, including Rex Trent, Ted Johnson, and Richard Secrest. These men appreciated the open-air ministry



**THE PHILADELPHIA TEAM - 1985**

which Bob and his team conducted, and were glad to be a sounding board for Bob. They provided solid guidance, wise suggestions, and offered keen observations to help the work improve over time.

As the personnel development director on the management team, Bob gave direction and counsel to branch directors, led our training seminars, and ensured that all incoming staff were adequately informed about this mission through the Orientation/Candidate School sessions he coordinated.



OAC leadership appointed Bob to establish the James A. Duffecy Endowment Fund in 2008. The goal of this initiative was not only to enable us to open up more branches and sustain current ones, but also to ensure that more lives would be changed and touched by the gospel through our staff on a long-term basis. God brought to us a Christian financial advisor, Bernie Bostwick, to assist

Bob in this endeavor. The endowment fund has grown through the years and continues to provide secure financial stability for our work. In 2009, Bob received the Washington Bible College Alumni of the Year award. He retired in 2022 on the 46th anniversary of his faithful service with OAC. Deidra graduated to heaven in August 2022.

## **Frontline Story**

We love investing in the lives of others by teaching them to use the sketchboard and other visuals to present the gospel effectively. A youth pastor encouraged us with the following note: "We have been sending a team of young people (ages 13-18) to Philadelphia for training through the Open Air Campaigners for about a decade now. The training has been excellent, relevant, and practical. Each year, we have used the sketchboard ministry as the foundation for our teen group's outreach. It has been used for boardwalk ministry, teaching in Sunday School, church programs, fairs, day camp, multiple VBS programs throughout the East Coast, Five-Day Clubs, open-air meetings in the Washington, D.C. area, and on college campuses. It has given us a tool to be out there ministering to young folk and adults alike."

## FUN FACT #2

**Our Sketchboard Evangelism Training sessions, which currently run Monday through Friday, were three weeks long for many years!**

After a successful ministry stationed overseas with The Navigators, John and Pearl Prince returned to the USA and joined our staff in 1976. They were based in Indiana and had a fruitful ministry for several years. In his later years, John struggled with Parkinson's disease, which took his life in 1996. After John's passing, Pearl continued living in Indiana, where she remained active in her local church and was promoted to heaven in 2004.



**JOHN & PEARL PRINCE**



**FRED & BARB KORNIS**

Fred Kornis trusted Christ on July 11, 1970. One of his life verses, which set the tone of his journey with the Lord, is Philippians 1:6: "Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will **carry it on** to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." God has been "carrying it on" in Fred's life all these years, and we are glad part of his journey included Open Air Campaigners.

When Fred trusted Christ, he was in the US Army, but as a new Christian, he also found himself in another kind of Army, the Lord's Army. The early days of Fred's journey included experience as an Army paratrooper with a tour in Vietnam. Despite the challenging environment of LZ English, where he was stationed, Fred's compassion shone brightly. He actively participated in drug rehabilitation efforts and helped with medevac rescues.

After his days in the Army, formal spiritual warfare training began at Trinity College in Florida. But this was just the beginning. His dedication and thirst for knowledge continued through the years as he achieved his Master of Arts Degree and a doctor's degree in Ministry from Faith Evangelistic Schools, followed by an Honorary Doctorate of Theology from Trinity College.

In 1976, Fred, his wife Barbara, and a young family came on staff in our Baltimore-Washington branch, working with David and

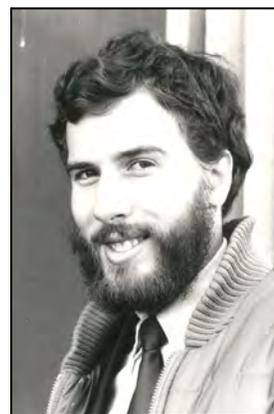


Elaine Wilson and Bob and Deidra Ewerth. Fred started as a staff evangelist and then became the branch director in 1979 when David and Elaine moved overseas for a year. Several years later, Fred was appointed as our national field director. The days of ministry in Baltimore included heading up Sketchboard Evangelism Training, working with youth groups, church teams, schools, open-air outreach, pulpit supply, prison ministry, nursing home services, and a host of other opportunities.



**LEFT TO RIGHT  
DENNIS KING, BOB,  
EWERTH, FRED KORNIS,  
VICKY ROGERS**

In 1979, Vicky Rogers came on board to assist Fred and the Baltimore team, which would grow to include Dennis and Sue King and Tom Major, who married Rita in 1982.



**TOM MAJOR**

In 1984, the Lord led Fred and Barb to move to the Philippines, where they worked with Barry Tetley of the Sowers Program, a ministry started through

OAC New Zealand (see chapter 30 for

more details). When they returned in

1986, Fred continued to serve as our

national field director. He then left OAC in 1988 to begin a missionary-evangelist role with Ambassadors for Christ

International (AFCI). Even though this role was with a different mission, AFCl had a close connection with Open Air Campaigners. The AFCl director from 1960 to 1975 was former OAC staff member Les Werry. Then, Allan Gardner filled this position from 1991 to 2002. Allan became acquainted with OAC as a teenager in Australia and joined the OAC Australia staff when he was around 18! For more than 65 years, Allan served the Lord as an evangelist, pastor, teacher, and mentor in more than 70 countries.

In 2001, the Lord led Fred to establish Heartland International Ministries. The vision for this ministry began in the back of a pickup truck on a rainy night in Nicaragua. Fred and his friend, Tony Reyes, talked and dreamed about how they could help connect two world groups. One sphere was made up of poor, Third World countries where they had been planting churches, evangelizing, and ministering to people. The other was the United States, containing wealth and affluence, needing to connect with real needs in suffering areas of the world.

Today, the Lord continues to "carry it on" in Fred's ministry. After more than 55 years of ministry and developing committed spiritual relationships at home and around the world, God has used him to establish a network of 300 indigenous/national workers across 15

countries. Fred's travels have taken him to diverse places such as Mexico, India, the Philippines, China, Kazakhstan, Europe, Nicaragua, Egypt, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Fiji, New Zealand, Haiti, Croatia, Guatemala, Honduras, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Poland, Bangladesh, and Nepal.

Here at home, Fred's legacy of love and devotion extends beyond his world mission calling. With a family that blossomed to include four married children, 16 grandchildren, and 8+ rapidly growing great-grandchildren, he embraces the challenges of life with grace and maturity. His wonderful wife, Barbara, of more than 55 years, has been a vital part of this journey every step of the way!

But wait, Fred is not done "carrying it on" yet! As of this writing, he continues as minister-at-large with Heartland International Ministries, serves on boards, authors books, ministers to his family, and travels near and far, "Proclaiming Christ By All Means Everywhere."

Russ Hodder was introduced to OAC in 1970 while in Bible college and came on staff with us in 1977. Here is how God orchestrated all of this, as told by Russ.



"After a tour of duty as a soldier in Vietnam, with my life and testimony being amazingly protected there, it was becoming clear that God might be calling me to some sort of ministry. I applied to and was accepted as a student at Biola College (now University) in La Mirada, California. Arriving in January 1970, I was informed that I needed to choose a ministry assignment in the local community, which was required of every student in this Christian institution. My roommate was working on his assignment with Open Air Campaigners, and he invited me to join him. After some training and a time of prayer in one of the classrooms at the college led by the local OAC director, Ed Martin, we were transported down to Hollywood for my first night of doing evangelism, right on famous Hollywood Boulevard. Evangelists Wes and Belva Dunn already had their van set up for our first street meeting of the evening. It was an experience dealing with tourists and the local population of runaway kids, many of whom came to Hollywood to seek fame and fortune, but instead ended up living on the street.

"After a rather rough start with OAC (I was shy by nature), God made it clear that I was to remain working with this ministry. I stayed with OAC all the way through college, and that extended into my entering Talbot School of Theology on the same campus.

Being a missions major at Talbot, I wanted to get a taste of working in a foreign country, so I applied for a summer training program with a mission doing ministry in Mexico and Central America. After a very encouraging time in Mexico and Guatemala, I was encouraged by members of that mission (and their personnel secretary, Ken Bemis) to join them when I completed seminary. As my time in seminary drew to a close, I had a choice between OAC and this other mission. God had not made that choice clear to me, so I applied to both missions and left it to God to sort it all out. It was not long before I received a letter from the other mission telling me that their personnel secretary, Ken Bemis, whom I had met in Mexico, had left to join another ministry. In the midst of the transition, my application form had been lost! I was asked to reapply. I went to the Wednesday night prayer meeting that week, and our pastor, Chuck Swindoll, introduced our new assistant pastor, Ken Bemis, who walked up on the platform! In the meantime, OAC accepted my application and invited me to attend the training seminar and the following Orientation/Candidate School held at Wheaton College in Illinois, where I first met Jim Duffecy. While there, and to our mutual surprise, I ran into Ed Martin. He asked me what I was doing at Wheaton. "I'm attending the OAC Candidate School, and I guess I'll join them if they want me," I replied. Jim Duffecy, overhearing our conversation, came over to us and said to me in his broad Australian accent, 'Don't worry, mate, we want you, we want you!' My future was settled!

*\*Editor's note: The Orientation/Candidate School is a one-week instruction required of all incoming staff. This week, a detailed explanation is provided regarding our mission, organizational structure, and in-house policies, protocols, and procedures. OAC documents included in this teaching time include our Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and policy manual.*

"Over the past 50-plus years, I have worked with OAC as a student, then as staff, then as Los Angeles area director, and then on the national board of directors. I am so thankful that God directed my way to OAC so many years ago. I have been blessed to have been chosen to continue to record the history of Open Air Campaigners that has occurred since 1983 and the heritage left to us by such pioneers as James Duffecy and those who preceded him since this mission was founded back in 1892."



Since coming on staff with us in 1977, God has brought many team members, financial supporters, volunteers, and staff to assist Russ in the Los Angeles ministry. Folks such

as Larry Baker, Bette Bond, Barry Felis, Gerald Hester, Margaret Holtrust, Carol King, Jim Kirkpatrick, Tom Knox, Orlando Lafica, Dr. Arthur Lee, Grant Nakadate, Bob Rennie, Mary Rosier, Jonathan Shader, Duang Tamti, and Ken Walker have all been a great help and blessing.

For several years, Russ mentored co-worker Frank Baldus and, in 2016, turned over the directorship of our Los Angeles branch to him. Russ continues to minister in the open air as a senior evangelist and is active in his local church.

### **Frontline Story**

Russ has always had a good rapport with individuals in the open air. It is not uncommon for him to encounter adults in the greater Los Angeles area who recall their childhood days when he taught them Bible stories in their neighborhood. Here is an example as told by Russ in a report he gave several years ago.

"Juan used to come to our kids' club on Townsend Street in Santa Ana when he was about 10 years old. He was mildly challenged and struggled with the take-home Bible lessons we gave him. Each week, for about two years, I would help him complete the lessons on-site. When he finished, I had him repeat the same lessons we had done together, this time by himself, giving him a real sense of accomplishment. He was always faithful in bringing back his completed lessons each week, and I could see he was spiritually growing. He moved to another neighborhood, and I lost track of him. I always wondered what happened to this young man and would pray for him. This last month, as we were going to Townsend Street, I thought of Juan again and prayed that I would be able to see him again. The only sure way of getting parking in this very crowded neighborhood is to follow the street sweeper every Wednesday, as the street, by law, must be cleared. That day, we went to a local park to wait for the street sweeper to come. While we waited, a young man walked by, took a double-take, and walked back. He looked in the window of my van and said, 'Russ! Do you remember me?' It was Juan! We had reconnected as a direct answer to my prayer! He is now 28 years old, and it has been about 10 years since I last saw him. I had not been able to give him a prize for the last series of Bible lessons he had completed, as he had moved. He remembered after 10 years ... 'Russ, you owe me a prize.' I believe that God has brought us together again for a reason, as I think He has spiritually drifted and needs encouragement. And yes, I gave him his prize!"



**ED LOWE**

*The Early Days*

Ed and Cathy Lowe lived in Chicago and had a great working relationship with Moody Bible Institute (MBI). Ed graduated from Moody in 1973 and, as our Chicago branch director, hosted many fruitful Sketchboard Evangelism Training sessions on the MBI campus and led student teams in the open air throughout the greater Chicago area. Some of his team members included Billy Richter, Lisa Gruthusen (who married Phillip Lundstrom), Lou Sari, and Wayne Conway. Ed eventually stepped down as full-time staff, but remained an associate

with us until 1995. He then founded Bridgeman Associates in Western Pennsylvania and continued ministering in the open air through the late 1990s. Ed and Cathy eventually moved to Central Florida and established a custom art and scenery business named KellGrace.



**ED & CATHY LOWE**



**WAYNE CONWAY**



**LISA LUNDSTROM**



**BILLY RICHTER**



**LOU SARI**

### **Frontline Story**

We received a letter from a lady who shared that, as a young teenager, her house was often filled with people partying and just looking to have a good time. The neighbors had called the police to this house 57 times! One afternoon, one of our OAC staff members, who lived next door to this lady, held an open-air meeting in her backyard. She and her friends asked the staff member to leave, and he did so politely and respectfully. After a long and painful life of disobedience and rebellion, this lady ended up in jail, facing up to a 20-year sentence in prison. She found herself in bondage to drugs and even contemplated ending her life to spare her daughter the life she was subjected to. And then, the God of change captured her heart and transformed her forever. Some time later, she felt led to contact our office; her note was an encouragement for us to continue ministering and be assured that our efforts for the Lord are not in vain. After a complete surrender to God, she answered God's call to ministry. Her note to us ended with " ... Thank you from the bottom of my heart; if there is ever anything I can do for you, don't hesitate to contact me."



**VICKY ROGERS**

Vicky Rogers became involved with OAC while attending Washington Bible College in Maryland. She joined the open-air teams that went out each week into the Baltimore-Washington area and grew to love the open-air ministry. Vicky reached a point where she was convinced that after graduating from Bible school, the Lord wanted her to utilize the administrative skills in OAC that He had given her. She joined our Baltimore-Washington branch staff in 1979 and helped establish an office for the three evangelists there: Fred Kornis, Bob Ewerth, and Dennis King. She also helped with the children's open-air meetings. It was during this time that God prepared Vicky to serve as Fred Kornis' administrative assistant for many years in the various

ministries he was involved with. She also served in the New York-New Jersey office for a year in 1981, helping out the national director, Art Williams. After a hiatus of moving back to Baltimore and working at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine to pay off her college debt, she relocated to the Kansas City area in 1988 to again serve as Fred Kornis's administrative assistant. In 1990, she joined Fred and Barb, who transitioned out of OAC to Ambassadors for Christ International.



Both John and Sue Cutlip grew up in Thompson, located in Northeast Ohio near Lake Erie. Sue was saved at a young age, and John trusted Christ at 18 through the witness of a fellow teenager at the local grocery store where he worked after school each day. A detailed account of John and Sue's leading to join OAC can be found in Chapter 1.



**JOHN & SUE CUTLIP**

In 1980, as John was walking across the graduation platform at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago to receive his diploma, the school's president, Dr. George Sweeting, told him that there was a great church in New Jersey he highly recommended. Dr. Sweeting's brother, Norman, had been the pastor at Hydewood Park Baptist Church in North Plainfield, New Jersey, for several years, which was a local

church known for its love of missions and solid Bible teaching. As it turned out, John and Sue visited Hydewood when they moved to New Jersey, became members, and remained active until their relocation to Pennsylvania in 1989.

There is an interesting connection between Dr. Sweeting and Open Air Campaigners through Hawthorne Gospel Church in New Jersey. Since age 13, Dr. Sweeting attended Hawthorne, was baptized there, and became active in the youth group. He grew in his faith at this local church, met his wife there, was married, ordained, and eventually returned to minister as Hawthorne's associate pastor. Jim and Joyce Duffecy were part of the Australian OAC team responsible for expanding this mission's work to North America. In 1952, Jim Duffecy preached his first sermon in the USA at Hawthorne Gospel Church. When Jim and Joyce eventually moved to America, they settled in the Glen Rock, New Jersey, area. They became active members of Hawthorne under the leadership of its pastor, Hermann Braunlin. Here is another interesting connection with this church. Pastor Braunlin's daughter, Connie, attended Moody Bible Institute and became good friends with Sue Cutlip from 1978 to 1980 while Sue worked in the Dean's Department at the school.

Through the years, John has used his gifts in administration and helps to function as the director of our Central Services office, which continues to this day. It has been his joy to provide the administrative and support services needed to keep our frontline staff equipped and at the task of evangelism to which God has called them. John also has the opportunity to minister in the open air and in his local church. He and Sue are grateful that God has used them in this ministry for 45 years of uninterrupted service.

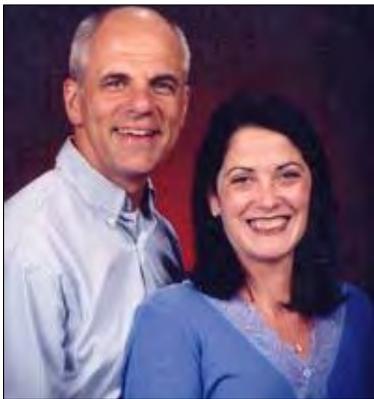


***JOHN, AKA "MR. C", USING SCIENCE LESSONS TO DEMONSTRATE SPIRITUAL TRUTH***

### FUN FACT #3



**In 1980, the largest three-week Sketchboard Evangelism Training took place at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago with 78 individuals registered. Out of this group, several came on staff with us, including Randy Riddle, Chris and Barb Schroeder, and John and Sue Cutlip.**



***ERIC & DIANE BRISCOE***

Staff evangelist Eric Briscoe was saved at the age of 13 at Happy "T" Ranch in New Hampshire. He studied at Massasoit Community College, receiving an Associate Degree in 1971, and was immediately drafted into the Army, serving two years with the 82nd Airborne Division. A Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and Math was earned in 1975 from Boston State College. Eric and Diane were married in 1976. Between 1981 and 1982, Eric attended the Word of Life School of Youth Ministries in New York, where he was introduced to our ministry. In the spring of 1982, the Lord made it clear he was to do the work of an evangelist. That year, Eric and Diane joined the OAC Philadelphia branch and eventually moved to the Boston area, where he became the branch director in 1986. Through the years, Eric's OAC co-laborers in that field have included Richard and Diane Burley, John and Tiffany Copell, Gordon and Beth-Eden Loop, Sue MacNeil, Rick and Dovie Moore, Jeff and Carol Owen, Jay Ricci, Mark and Shelby Sohmer, Aaron and Tonya Wentz, and Paul and Judy Zagrobski. An additional ministry came Eric's way as he was appointed our USA field director in 1991, serving as a member of the management team and also a national board member. Eric mentored Brian Harmon for several years, who eventually

took over as field director in 2020. Since then, Eric has continued to lead the evangelistic outreach in our Boston branch and serve as a consultant to the management team and the board of directors. Additionally, he organizes ongoing open-air training sessions and leads outreach teams in Boston and at multi-state locations, including the annual student break outreach to Miami, Florida.

In Eric's opinion, the two open-air meeting pictures below illustrate the foundational purpose of OAC: a mission that comes alongside the local church and the body of



Christ at large, equipping them to reach their communities with the gospel. The pictures show Torre Fuerte Iglesia and Marsh Corner Community Church collaborating to serve a Spanish community within walking distance of the church. Months after this event, the pastor sent Eric this note: "Marsh Corner has been blessed in

our working with you in 2024. You were a catalyst in bringing us closer to our brothers and sisters in Lawrence. You challenged many in our congregation to step outside of their comfort zone and reach people in their own communities. What is more, working with OAC has enlivened all of the congregation, even the ones who were not part of the Lawrence outreach, and excited them about being a part of a church that does outreach. It is a joy to see."



## Frontline Story

In 2006, Eric Briscoe, his wife Diane, Paul Adams, and Mark Johnson began recruiting students from Liberty University in Virginia for short-term open-air ministry. Richard and Diane Burley, along with Rick and Dovie Moore, also participated. Eric and his team would train the students in effective open-air evangelism methods, and then they would all travel to a major city for outreach. Up to three of the wives would do the cooking. From 2006 to 2008, Daytona, Florida, was the destination. In 2009, Miami became the city of choice, and it remains the annual outreach destination to this day. This concentrated week of evangelism is an opportunity to reach adults, children, and also college students who visit Florida during spring break. It has proven to be a time abundantly blessed by God. Guest teachers and outreach leaders from other ministries who have joined us for these times of training and outreach include Mark Johnson, mentioned above, and Kent Blalock. These men have worked with us on several occasions and are like-minded evangelists who God has used greatly for His Kingdom work.

Here is what some of the former Liberty students have to say about this time of ministry.

**Gretel said,** "This trip truly taught me what it meant to depend fully on the Lord for strength. I particularly enjoyed how our leaders encouraged us to ask people questions first and answer them according to what they said. It reminded me of how Jesus communicated with people and spoke according to where people were at while discerning their intentions too. Even though I had some difficult conversations that left me speechless, I learned to surrender these people to the Lord and trust that my job was solely to sow the seeds while the Lord produced the growth."

**Kacie said,** "I am so grateful that this was my first mission. It was so inspiring to see the kids so receptive to the gospel! I was also very moved by the father and daughter who returned the next night with the girl's sister to talk to me again. They were so interested and respectful. I could tell they were curious and thinking about what I was saying, but they were still very firm in their Catholic beliefs. I know the Holy Spirit was moving in them, I saw them thinking and questioning. I hope I planted a seed. I am so grateful for every conversation I had. It allowed me to see what I need to gain more knowledge on to be able to answer more questions and it showed me different ways to share the gospel. I am very grateful I got to have this experience. I will never be the same."



**ERIC BRISCOE**

**Hannah K. wrote,** "I had never been on a mission trip until this one, and I was new to doing street evangelism. At the beginning of the trip, I was nervous to do things that I had never done before; it was definitely out of my comfort zone, but being able to see how intentional the Lord was with bringing people who were hungry for the gospel was truly so impactful. I also loved being able to get closer to the team we had. Getting to walk through this experience with other believers helped me grow in my faith; through conversations and getting to hear testimonies of people on the team really helped bring the team closer together."

**Ruthie wrote,** "The trip was an eye-opening experience and helped me realize that to grow closer in my relationship with God and challenge my faith, I would need to do things like this. Working with the kids in the poorer inner-city neighborhoods was very fun, but it saddened me to see the lives that they were living. The very last day of the kids' ministry was the best in my opinion because I got to share the gospel with a group of kids that were attentive and listening and seemed receptive to the message. The adult ministries were a whole different ball game, and I think every Christian needs to be put in this kind of challenging situation to grow in their relationship with God. I had to solely rely on Him to know what to say to people when I got into a conversation, and I relied on Him for the courage to hand out tracts. Rejection was a major fear, but each night, I got a little bit more confident. I know that He was able to use me to plant seeds in everyone that I talked to, even if I stumbled through my words or wasn't able to give a solid answer."

**Charis said,** "I was encouraged by the whole team and their excitement to tell people about Jesus. I gained so much wisdom from the leaders and grew in my personal walk with the Lord. Sharing the gospel is something I've always struggled with. I know as believers we are called to make disciples; however, it still can be a scary thing for me to do. I saw God work every single night as we were evangelizing. God gave me peace as I talked, and He provided so many divine appointments. It always amazes me the number of strangers who are willing to talk about what they believe about eternity, and who are willing to hear the gospel. This trip reminded me of the power of the gospel and that I should not be ashamed of it. We live in a broken world, and people need the hope of salvation. The Holy Spirit was working, and I learned how to better rely on Him for strength and for the words to say."

**Hannah B. wrote,** "Working with the children's ministry opened my eyes to so many things I had never considered. The ability to show love to those hearts and receive it back felt like more of a gift to me than them. The street ministry was something I was very nervous about. However, it gave me so much more perspective than I could have imagined. I learned so much by being questioned by others and hearing their

perspectives. God allowed me to meet so many people who were already searching for him. There were so many divine conversations and purposeful moments that it would take many pages to write them all down. On this trip, I saw God's hand still reaching. The ability to experience what we did renewed and strengthened my faith and left me with a desire to pursue Him and future ministry."



*LOU SARI*

Lou Sari came on staff in the Chicago area in 1982, was engaged to Kim in 1984, and followed Ed Lowe as Chicago director in 1985. He was blessed to have Wayne and Karen Conway come on staff to work with him in 1986. Wayne is known in our OAC family as the one who was stabbed on a bus in Chicago, which injured one of his lungs. He survived this attack but had a long road to recovery and was eventually back to ministering in the open air. The Chicago team had excellent ministry training and led students from Moody Bible Institute out into the open air on a regular basis. Lou was promoted to heaven in 2013.

Chuck Williams learned about OAC during his seminary training in Chattanooga, Tennessee, through one of our staff members, David Braun. On some frigid winter days, David and Chuck would minister in the open air at a local flea market, where Chuck learned the basic methods of our ministry. These outreach times caused Chuck to dedicate himself to the Lord for a lifelong open-air preaching ministry.



*CHUCK & LINDA WILLIAMS*

Chuck and his wife, Linda, moved to New Jersey in 1982 as new team members of our New York-New Jersey branch after graduation and completing our Sketchboard Evangelism Training and Orientation/Candidate School. After ministering for a few years, Chuck sensed the Lord leading him and Linda to begin a new branch of OAC on the West Coast. The plan was to



visit California with another evangelist to see if the area could support the ministry. Instead, David Innes, pastor of Hamilton Square Baptist Church, invited Chuck to come on staff and have an open-air evangelism ministry through the church. In this way, the local church would replace OAC as the hub of his open-air ministry. Being in total support of the local church, we gave Chuck and Linda our blessing as he moved his family first to Pacifica and then to South San Francisco.

As of this writing, Chuck is nearly 90 years old and continues to have a ministry of writing and helping multiple churches in their efforts to call a new preaching pastor, including tutoring several preachers, all behind the scenes. He lives with his eldest daughter in Gilbert, Arizona. His wife, Linda, is with the Lord as of May 2016.



***NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY STAFF - CIRCA 1982-1983***

***Front row (left to right) Art Williams / Peggy Williams / Betty Naggy / George Naggy***

***Middle row (left to right) Sherry Siler (who married Sam Frey) / Linda Williams / Sue Cutlip / Barbara Schroeder / Janet Fureman***

***Back row (left to right) Chuck Williams / John Cutlip / Chris Schroeder***

In 1982, the training picture below was taken at Tennessee Temple University in Chattanooga; several participants became OAC staff from this group. Front row, from far left to right, includes Barry Tetley, Jack Kreidler, Russ Hodder, Art Williams, Chris Schroeder, and Ed Lowe. For readers familiar with our history, here is a challenge: see if you can name the other OAC staff members in this picture, including Orlando Lafica, Eric Briscoe, Barb Schroeder, Diane Briscoe, Bob Ewerth, George Naggy, David Wilson, Chuck Williams, Jim Duffecy, and Lou Sari. Also in the picture are Chip Welton and Tammy Bellinger, who met during this time and were eventually married. Chip and Tammy currently live in Canada, which serves as home base for their open-air ministry.



## THE DAYS OF CHANGE

1983 was a notable year of change in our OAC history, as this was the last year of Jim Duffecy's earthly ministry. On November 18, he was to speak in Toronto at a retirement banquet for Canadian staff Norm and Shirley Wyman, but suffered a heart attack, which took his life the day before the banquet.

Conducting open-air evangelism and training others to do the same was in Jim's spiritual DNA. In addition to sharing Christ in the open air, helping OAC expand to new fields, and promoting this ministry to the Christian public, he wrote four books: *Another Sherlock Holmes in England*, *Sketchboard Sermons*, *Sketchboard Sermons No. 2*, and our first OAC history book, *The Truceless Warfare Advances*. He was devoted to the call God had given him to participate in and expand the ministry of open-air preaching, reaching folks who will not or cannot enter a local church to hear the gospel. On the last Wednesday of his life, he was preaching in the open air, unaware that early the next day would be his last on earth.



**JIM DUFFECY**

At Jim's memorial service held in Canada, the new OAC International President, Tom Swan, read the many telegrams and letters of sympathy from near and far. On behalf of our mission, he extended our sense of shock, compassion, love, prayer support, and appreciation to Jim's wife, Joyce, and the family. Art Williams led in prayer, Norm Wyman read the Scriptures, and Dr. Paul B. Smith of The Peoples Church spoke. At a memorial service held in Sydney, the Rev. Bernard Judd summarized Jim Duffecy's legacy when he said, "His was a victorious and fulfilled life."

### **FUN FACT #4**

**John Cutlip's father, Elmer, did automotive bodywork as a hobby. In the early 1980s, he repainted Jim Duffecy's van at the Cutlip home in Northeast Ohio. John was taught how to prep and paint vehicles by his dad as a teenager. In the late 1980s, John spray-painted a vintage Studebaker for New York staff member George Naggy in George's backyard at his home on Long Island!**

God used Jim Duffecy and the leaders of his era to lay a solid foundation for OAC, which has been expanded over many years. Since Jim died in 1983, the Lord has provided additional staff and new leadership, helping us continue preaching the same gospel in new fields worldwide.

Tom Swan was appointed the OAC International president, succeeding Jim Duffecy. Tom was from Canada and excelled at organizing and formulating short and long-term goals. In the years that followed, he would be particularly instrumental in helping our USA work with problem-solving sessions and assist as we formulated our strategic vision, goals, and objectives. His guidance allowed us to establish a solid administrative structure that would confidently take us into the future. We are grateful for Tom's willingness to pour himself into our lives and equally thankful to his wife, Holly, for sharing him with us during those years.



***OLGA KRUCK***

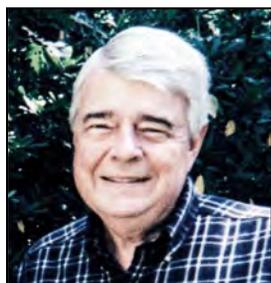


***RALPH  
COGLIANESE***

Since the leadership days of Jim Duffecy and Tom Swan, new fields of ministry have opened before us here in the USA. As noted earlier, the work in this country began in Chicago, where our national headquarters was located in Wheaton, Illinois. This location changed when Art Williams became the national director. Since he was also the New York-New Jersey director and lived in Plainfield, New Jersey, our national leadership office moved to New Jersey and was established in Art's home. However, the Wheaton, Illinois, accounting office remained intact, although we did move to a smaller office location on Wesley Street in downtown Wheaton. Staff members Ralph Coglianesse and Olga Kruck continued to faithfully carry out our daily national accounting activity at the Wesley Street location for several years.

The last national leadership meeting in Illinois was held on September 16, 1982, with Chairman John Barrier presiding. At John's request, Art accepted the resignations of all the Illinois board members to clear the way for a new leadership team in New Jersey, who would now be in charge of the USA work. The first new leadership members were Hugh McKay, Pastor Charles Horton, Elmer Van Dyke, and Bob Howard. Many new leadership meetings occurred at the Goodwill Home and Rescue Mission in Newark, New Jersey. In the beginning, the contact man at this rescue mission was its director and OAC New York committee man, Elmer Van Dyke. Later, our contact was Al Nicholson, a member of Hydewood Park Baptist Church in North Plainfield, mentioned earlier.

Although we were officially registered as a non-profit corporation in Illinois in 1958, the leadership's move to New Jersey made it expedient that Open Air Campaigners also incorporate in that state. As a result, OAC became registered as a non-profit organization in New Jersey in 1983, with the legal help and counsel of a Christian attorney and long-time friend of the ministry, Jim Ozias.



**DONALD PETERSON**

Another notable person who loved OAC and was a great help to us in the 1980s was New Jersey businessman Donald Peterson. Donald was a dedicated Christian with a degree in electrical engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and an MBA from Rutgers. He and his wife, Jean, were passengers on Flight 93 (the only married couple on board that day), which was hijacked and deliberately crashed by terrorists into a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, on September 11, 2001.

In 1983, Sam Frey joined our staff. Sam's father was a staff member at Word of Life Bible Institute (WOLBI) in Upstate New York, so Sam's growing-up years around the Word of Life culture gave him a solid spiritual foundation for the rest of his life. OAC, too, had a connection with Word of Life. In the early 1970s, Jack Wyrzten from Word of Life and our USA Director, Art Williams, created a training plan for WOLBI's students. The school would send groups of 24 students to us for nine days at a time. During these nine days, our New York-New Jersey staff would teach these students in the classroom about open-air evangelism and then take them into New York City to apply, through outreach meetings, what they had been learning about in theory. At first, the teams were housed in rented quarters in Irvington, New Jersey, and later at The Fellowship Deaconry in Basking Ridge, New Jersey, and then at Manhattan Bible Church in New York City. In the 1980s, this training expanded to include not only New York City but also our branches in Boston, Chicago, and Philadelphia. At one point, there was serious consideration of OAC purchasing a building dedicated to training and outreach, but this did not come to pass. Here is Sam Frey's account of how the Lord moved him in our direction.



**SAM & SHERRY FREY**

"When I was [a student] at the Word of Life Bible Institute, I joined their choir in large part so I wouldn't have to minister in open-air evangelism! The very thought scared me to death as I was quite the introvert. While a student at Tennessee Temple University, I



**SAM FREY - 1980**

had to complete a ministry requirement in my senior year, so I selected OAC. Under the direction of and instructed by David Braun, I joined him, his wife, Joy, and the team for ministry day trips to Atlanta, Dalton, Georgia, and Birmingham, Alabama. Surprised at how God saw fit to use me and that I was still alive, I spent three days in New Jersey with OAC during my Christmas break.

"One day was spent gluing together the ends of rope tricks. On another, more notable day, I accompanied Art Williams and some 'preacher boys' into the Bronx for a day of outreach. It was cold, so after they preached, each guy in turn would warm up inside a nearby store. I didn't know how to preach a sketchboard message, so I didn't warm up! Being fearful, I talked to no one all afternoon and handed out only five tracts. I did, however, listen intently to the dialogues the others had with passersby. I was stunned as I heard people making remarks to our team members like, 'I never heard this before!', 'You mean Jesus is physically alive — not just that His ideas live on?' and, 'I wouldn't know how to get to heaven if you paid me to tell you!' That day, I saw the need of many lost souls for the gospel, a message few of them had heard before in our so-called Christian nation! As I noticed the crowded planes flying over our heads from LaGuardia airport, observed the city buses crammed full of passengers, and saw the rivers of rush-hour crowds passing by on foot, I tried to imagine a reason I could stand before God some day and give Him a satisfactory answer for why I didn't spend my life trying to reach so many uninformed, but open souls. I had nothing, so I told God, 'I could never do what these guys do with the board and such, but if I can help them do what they do, I'm available.' Little did I realize that by God's grace alone, I would be doing exactly that, and soon.

"I followed God's leading by taking the OAC training seminar at Tennessee Temple University in June of 1983, and went directly to Orientation/Candidate School at



**SHERRY WAS ACTIVE IN THE OFFICE AND IN THE OPEN AIR**

Washington Bible College in Maryland. Within 24 hours of graduation, I found myself with no money, no car, no permanent housing, and no promised support, temporarily staying at the Goodwill Home and Rescue Mission in Newark, New Jersey, with two other summer staff members. That lasted for only five days, though, as I accepted an invitation to stay and sleep on a sofa bed in a third-floor apartment in Plainfield, New Jersey, with John and Sue Cutlip. A couple of months later, an apartment opened for me a couple of doors down the street, and I moved in with OAC staff man Ken Fischer for eight months until Sherry and I were married.

"I phased into full-time work with OAC within the first six months. During my time in Plainfield, I worked with Dave and Joy Braun, John and Sue Cutlip, Ken Fischer, Janet Fureman, Jack Kreidler, George and Betty Naggy, Chris and Barb Schroeder, Ron and Michal Stoesz, Al and Linda Terhune, Art and Peggie Williams, Chuck and Linda Williams, David and Elaine Wilson, and Ken Worrell.

"After a second six months, co-worker Chris Schroeder had left OAC, and I was placed into the position of New York City branch director, where I served for several years until joining Word of Life.

"Since leaving OAC in June of 1991, I have been laboring as Word of Life Evangelism Ministries coordinator. By God's grace, I've had the privilege to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ and train other believers to do the same in about 80 towns and cities of 14 nations worldwide. I will always praise God and be thankful for my eight years in OAC. It was there that I was taught, encouraged, and mentored, made life-long friendships and connections, and gained experience to allow God to use me in the work of evangelism. It was with OAC that I caught the vision, set the trajectory, and followed the example of others to reach the lost where they are. To God be the glory!"



**AL & FRANCES COLLINS**

Al Collins, at age 72, was actively conducting jail ministry with us in the early 1980s. He and his wife, Frances lived in South Carolina and felt the Lord calling them to serve Him in a vocational manner during their retirement years. Al, a former Metropolitan Life Insurance representative asked the Lord to grant him health and strength for an active frontline evangelism ministry during his post-career years. He even made an extra effort to earn his Doctor of Theology Degree from the Emmaus Bible Institute on November 20, 1984.

Al Collins, at age 72, was actively conducting jail ministry with us in the early 1980s. He and his wife, Frances lived in South Carolina and felt the Lord calling them to serve Him in a vocational manner during their retirement years. Al, a former Metropolitan Life Insurance representative asked the Lord to grant him health and strength for an active frontline evangelism ministry



**AL'S LICENSE PLATE**

In 1983, Art Williams made his annual trip to the Atlanta School of Biblical Studies to speak to the student body about the work of OAC and trusted the Lord that he might make initial contact with future staff as a result. One of the students from Minnesota, Ron Stoesz, was very interested and participated in our training seminar that year. After the training was done, he ministered with Chuck Phelps in our Minneapolis-St. Paul branch, as he prepared to join our mission. Ron and his wife, Michal, came on staff with us from 1984 to 1990. In 1986, They transferred from working with David Wilson in our Overseas Division to being part of our New York-New Jersey team. They and their two children lived on Staten Island. They had vast ministry opportunities in the greater New York City area, including inner-city community centers, the Staten Island Ferry, schools, and prisons. They enjoyed great times with Word of Life students who came to our New York-New Jersey branch, as mentioned earlier, for training and outreach. Ron also helped coordinate



**RON STOESZ**



**RON STOESZ (far right)  
LEADING A TEAM IN HARLEM**

professional Christian athletes who would come to New York City high schools to speak and share their testimonies. Evangelistic trips to Europe, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti also occurred. Their continuing connections in Minnesota provided additional ministry opportunities at state fairs and local church events in that region. Trips to various other states during the year to conduct training and outreach were not uncommon. After six fruitful years, the Lord led Ron Michal to other ministry.

**FUN FACT #5**

**An Airstream travel trailer was donated to OAC in the early 1980s. Word of Life Bible Institute in Upstate New York allowed us to park it at their camp facility for OAC staff and board members to use until it was sold, proceeds used for open-air ministry.**



**CHRIS & KAREN WILLIAMS**

Karen Williams was born and raised in a Christian home. She attended church from the cradle and trusted Christ as a preteen. She was introduced to Open Air Campaigners at her local church. Being of a shy nature, she was not looking to be involved in outdoor evangelism, but God had other plans. Through her church, she was assigned to a 10-day evangelistic New York City trip led by our OAC staff. After graduating high school, she explored other mission career options, but God kept bringing her back to considering our mission. She joined us as a full-time worker in our Philadelphia branch office in 1984. It took several years of working behind the scenes to discover that God had gifted her to also work with children. As a result of taking a course on teaching children offered by the Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF), she began working with them on loan from OAC in 1998. This opportunity to teach children's clubs several times each week allowed her to develop a unique presentation style. The mix of involvement with both OAC and CEF resulted in exciting Bible stories illustrated on a sketchboard that captured the attention of both young and old alike.



In September 2006, Karen transitioned back to full time with us, married Chris in May 2012, and moved to Arizona. Chris was promoted to heaven in 2025, and as of this writing, Karen continues to present the gospel to children and teaches others to use her techniques. She also produces custom-made object lessons for evangelistic outreach.



**DAVID & JOY BRAUN**

David Braun was born in Jersey City and raised in Holmdel, New Jersey. Through the witness of a Christian National Guardsman and the ministry of Lincroft Bible Church, he was saved at the age of 28 and found out about Open Air Campaigners as a student at Word of Life Bible Institute in 1980. He also met Joy at WOLBI, and they got married after graduation. Joy was born and raised in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. While a student nurse, she was led to Christ by the pastor of the North Waverly Chapel in Waverly, New York.

David graduated from Tennessee Temple University in 1984 with a BA in Religious Education as a pastoral studies major and moved to New Jersey. He was ordained and joined Open Air Campaigners in 1985, serving as an evangelist in the New York-New Jersey branch before moving to Pennsylvania in 2000 to be part of our Philadelphia branch.



JoAnne LaRue came on staff with us and served faithfully from 1985 to 2000. Here is JoAnne's account of how the Lord led her in our direction.

“I was a shy and hopelessly homesick freshman at Washington Bible College. On October 9, 1981, I experienced my first exposure to Open Air Campaigners and



**JOANNE LARUE**

open-air evangelism; my life was radically changed forever! It was that evening after the conclusion of the open-air meeting when I had the opportunity to share the gospel with a 14-year-old boy named Eric, something that so totally departed from my naturally shy self. This had to be God! Eric decided to put his trust in Jesus as Savior, and I had the amazing privilege of leading him in that decision, something I had never experienced before. My life was never the same from that moment on! As one person put it, 'I spent thousands of dollars to go through four years of Bible

college so that I could be on the open-air team!' That's not so far from the truth! It was the natural step after college to join Open Air Campaigners full time.

"I worked in several different areas, beginning in the New York-New Jersey branch as secretary to the Overseas Ministries Director, David Wilson. At that time, I didn't know much about being a secretary as I had never been one, but John Cutlip taught me everything I needed to know! I loved working in the office, but the really special days were those spent on the street doing meetings. I also spent a year working in Toronto, Canada, as an administrative assistant to the International President of OAC, who was then Bob MacArthur. Toward the end of my year in Toronto, I sensed God leading me back to Washington Bible College to represent OAC there as a Missionary in Residence. I worked at the college for eight years, training students and leading them out in meetings.

"Since leaving OAC, I have continued to use the many things I learned as I work through Heartland International Ministries. If I were to try and condense it, I would have to quote the OAC Motto: 'Presenting Christ By All Means Everywhere.' This motto has served me well during my 40+ years of ministry. It has taught me to seek out new and creative ways of sharing Christ whenever, wherever, and however the opportunity presents itself.

"Of course, I have continued to use the sketchboard as my main method of teaching, but other tools have also become very useful in my ministry. First would be my puppet and ventriloquism. I learned ventriloquism as a 9-10-year-old child from a toy my parents got me for Christmas. Amazing how God gave me that interest, knowing I would be using it now around the world! Kids, as well as adults, enjoy it when I get the puppet out of her suitcase!

"Another 'tool' that I have totally enjoyed incorporating into my ministry is my dog! This began back in 2010 when my dog was 11 months old. I had put together a collection of spiritual lessons I had learned from working with and training Opie. I started taking Opie to Christian school chapels, Released Time Bible classes with public school students, Vacation Bible Schools, nursing homes, and just about anywhere I had the opportunity to minister! After several years of training, Opie became a certified therapy dog. This opened new doors, such as the public library, where kids would come and read to him. A week before I lost Opie at 15 1/2, God literally dropped a new puppy in my lap! Even though Marbles is still a work in



**MARBLES**

progress in his training, he has already accompanied me for several ministry outings. My goal is to have him certified as a therapy dog as well, but already, Marbles is making a name for himself! He was barely three months old when he went to his first Christian school chapel.

“I have often thought back to the first sermon my father ever preached. He wasn’t a pastor but was always willing to fill the pulpit when asked. His sermon title was 'What is that in your hand?' based on God’s question to Moses in Exodus 4:2. As I look back over my now 40 years of ministry, I have seen many things that God has placed into my hand: a paintbrush, some ropes, a puppet, and two different puppies. It is exciting to see how God will use simple things when we open our hands and give them back to Him.”

As of this writing, JoAnne lives in Maryland and continues an ongoing ministry of after-school programs, summer camps, chapels, Vacation Bible Schools, special events, and many other avenues of outreach activity. Marbles has now grown into a faithful companion and is a vital part of her outreach endeavors.

In 1986, Los Angeles staff Orlando and Stephanie Lafica moved to Missouri and opened up the St. Louis area for OAC outreach. Stephanie’s parents, Phil and Madonna Hipps, were from the St. Louis area and instrumental in establishing several Brethren assemblies there. In 1983, our Minneapolis-St. Paul director Chuck Phelps spent 17 days with Dr. and Mrs. Hipps, giving them open-air evangelism training and conducting 63 meetings during their time together. For many years, it had been on Orlando’s heart to move to the St. Louis area. So, with his Bible training at Biola in California complete and a good experience working with our open-air team in the Los Angeles area, the time came to launch into this new field of ministry in the Midwest.



***RUTHIE & JIM GOCHNAUER***

Since the early 1980s, Jim and Ruthie Gochnauer, who lived in the Lancaster, Pennsylvania, area, have been well acquainted with OAC. They operated a graphic design and printing enterprise located in their basement and did quite an extensive marketing and print business in the greater Lancaster area. We often had our printing needs cared for by the Gochnauers, and they have been very helpful in consulting and assisting us in the ministry through the years. Jim and Ruthie

came into OAC as associate staff in 1988. During their time with us, establishing a dedicated in-house OAC publication department was seriously considered. Even though all the details needed to make this happen did not materialize, the Gochnauers' help, advice, and encouragement in this area were a great blessing nonetheless. God eventually called them to move to New York City and to become involved in the administration and operation of a Christian elementary school for several years. They currently live in Brooklyn.



**JOE TOY**

Joe Toy was saved in 1982 at the age of 21 while attending Millersville University in Pennsylvania. After receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in economics and business from Millersville, he spent two years in the public accounting field. He was introduced to Open Air Campaigners through a Sketchboard Evangelism Training seminar at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. He participated in the New Jersey Orientation/Candidate School after the training. He was a volunteer evangelist for four years and began ministering as an OAC Intern in 1987, working with Bob Ewerth and the Philadelphia branch team. He and his wife, Wendy, have five children, all boys! After his time of staff

ministry with OAC, God led Joe to take what he had learned and establish a mission called Open Air Ministries (OAM). Today, Joe's ministry continues at full speed and is based in the Raleigh, North Carolina, area. Much of his ministry occurs in this region, with special outreach in other locations throughout the year. One fruitful venue for sharing the gospel is in New Orleans during Mardi Gras each year in conjunction with local churches, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, and other ministries. Joe also teams up with Call of Grace Ministries and Sports Fan Outreach International to hold open-air meetings during the annual Super Bowl. At the time of this writing, Joe is an active member of our OAC national board of directors.

## **Frontline Story**

Joe Toy finds that outreach in Ocean City, Maryland, is a terrific place to share Christ. During the days of COVID-19, outreach venues such as the Kentucky Derby and the Indy 500 were canceled, but the Maryland outreach was still on. His team during that time consisted of men from Virginia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and North Carolina. Each day, they preached, witnessed, and passed out tracts. Well over 3,000 tracts were

distributed in five days. At first, Joe wondered whether there would be crowds; if so, would they want to talk or keep their distance? Would people receive gospel tracts? To his surprise, as they hit the boardwalk on Sunday night, the place was packed with people. It was as if COVID-19 were ancient history! People were not social distancing, and 90% were not wearing masks. Joe's team set up the sketchboard to proclaim the gospel. A man in a wheelchair listened to the preaching and engaged in conversation with one of Joe's co-workers, Mark Johnson. He confessed to drifting away from God and began to cry. Before he left, he thanked the team for being out there and even prayed for them. Later that night, a young man named Todd said, "I was meant to talk to you. Thanks." A few minutes later, Joe was engaged in conversation with a couple. The woman told him that she appreciated his non-antagonistic approach, as others she had talked to from other groups had actually been cruel. The team experienced a genuine openness in the people to converse about spiritual matters.



*CARMIÑA & PAUL ADAMS*

Paul Adams was introduced to Open Air Campaigners through Forcey Bible Church in Washington, DC, on July 4, 1989. Paul and his wife, Carmiña, took the OAC Sketchboard Evangelism Training and Candidate School and came on staff in 1996, working in our Baltimore-Washington branch, which, at that time, included, among others, co-worker John Plasterer and his wife, Cathy, who were with us from 1993 to 1998. Paul's service in the Marine Corps also prepared him for ministry on the front lines of evangelism. He has been involved in leading youth mission teams for over 35 years, equipping and

training churches in evangelism, teaching, and preaching as a guest on Sunday mornings, and leading Sunday school classes. In addition, Paul served as our director in the Baltimore-Washington branch for several years, until 2011, when he was appointed evangelist-at-large. This new position fulfilled a long-time desire to be involved in teaching and training in a focused way.

Paul and Carmiña moved to the Richmond, Virginia, area in 2017 and currently live there. From this base, Paul assists our field director in visiting and encouraging OAC staff, helping branches with special outreach initiatives and training, identifying potential evangelists in various cities, equipping them, and encouraging individuals to consider a staff position with OAC. He also helps establish branches in new locations.

## Frontline Story

God has used both Paul and Carmiña in the United States and in various places overseas, including Romania, Albania, England, and Finland. Two days after returning from one of their trips to Albania, a team of volunteers from a local church in Maryland



***PAUL ADAMS CONDUCTING PARK MINISTRY***

came to assist Paul in starting the first OAC ministry for children in the Richmond, Virginia, area. During the week of ministry in a challenging neighborhood, team members were able to provide snacks, play games, give prizes, and, most importantly, share the gospel with children

at two different club locations. It was a tremendous blessing to witness the team grow in courage, moving from fear of entering a neighborhood where spent gun casings littered the ground to confidently sharing the gospel and playing with the kids, even giving them piggyback rides all around the area. This experience served as a public testimony to the grace, goodness, and power of God.

Doris Johnson was on staff on two different occasions. Both of her times with us were located in our New York-New Jersey branch. Although the majority of her ministry was administrative in nature, she did join our open-air teams from time to time. After serving with us for several years the first time, the Lord led her back to OAC in 1989, when she joined us as an associate staff person. She worked for Art Williams in his office in the New York-New Jersey branch and also joined the teams for outreach ministry as she was able.



***DORIS JOHNSON***



## THE DAYS OF CHALLENGE - Composed by Russ Hodder

We must now pause and look at a trying time in the history of OAC here in the United States. The history of Open Air Campaigners has, in general, embraced a number of denominational backgrounds, reflected in the makeup of our staff members. Our ministry is united by a basic doctrinal statement that all can agree on, which has historically and wisely avoided denominational



*USA STAFF - 1983*

labels that could be cultural rather than Bible-based. When Jim Duffecy was alive, he successfully kept the ministry free of potential problems in this area, including disagreements and strife over non-essential doctrinal issues.

Our USA leadership on the board level during the early 1990s felt that, for the work here in the States to grow, we could not be as broad-based as we had been in the past, but needed to associate with the independent fundamentalist side of the Christian spectrum and separate ourselves from all other broad-based thinking. In addition, during these days, board members were selected by the US director in a self-perpetuating management style. There came a time when some immediate measures were taken by the leadership to remove staff who disagreed with this philosophy. A written directive was sent to all USA staff, stating that if any could not abide by these guidelines, their "...immediate resignation was demanded." The American staff were deeply concerned by these events.

David Wilson separated from the USA work and established a separate organization, Open Air Campaigners, Overseas Ministries, which was renamed Worldwide Proclamation in 2016. In a short time, about one-half of the USA staff resigned. Some staff put themselves under the authority of the Overseas Ministries, while others eventually joined another mission board or formed their own. Those who remained with OAC-USA tried to reason with the board, but at this time, there were no staff members on the board, except the director. This writer suggested at a staff conference that two staff members be appointed as non-voting members of the board to represent staff interests. Such staff members would have the power to address any board directive

they felt went against staff interests. Surprisingly, the board allowed this to happen, revisited the separation directive, and made revisions that were more acceptable to the staff. This took place at the OAC-USA staff conference in Boston, February 1990. However, as time went by, it became increasingly clear that our staff were not able, in good conscience, to follow the continuing philosophy of the existing board of directors. The two individuals representing our staff on the board continued dialogue with the leadership. At a December 10, 1990, board meeting, the US director and entire board resigned, agreeing to serve as caretakers of the work until March 18, 1991, at which time new leadership would be put in place by current staff.

The March 1991 meeting was held at Liebenzell Mission and Conference Center in New Jersey. This writer was one of the two staff representatives present. The staff and the proposed new board members were outside the meeting room awaiting the anticipated leadership change. When the old board stepped out, and the new board stepped in, only a few minutes were available to conduct the business at hand. John Cutlip, our administrator, had everything ready to go on paper. The new board was quickly elected, and the latest guidelines were voted on without delay. It was 5 p.m., and we had made our deadline! Our remaining staff were informed and, with many tears of joy, rejoiced over what had happened. Open Air Campaigners was now in the hands of new leadership; we could move ahead with confidence.

Our struggles during this time of our OAC-USA history took a severe toll on several staff members, but the mission in the United States had survived. We were ready to rebuild our mission and expand again. It should be emphasized that no one on either side of this issue was "evil." We were dealing with a difference in ministry philosophy and management style. The majority of our staff felt that the old board's exclusive approach was incompatible with a ministry like ours, which sought to be international and interdenominational in scope rather than narrow and selective. There was also agreement among most of our staff that OAC leadership should be appointed by a majority vote of the current staff and board membership, serving limited terms, rather than being hand-picked and self-perpetuating.

The positive side of this challenging time was that most staff who left to form new organizations continue to this day. One of these missions, Bible Open Air Mission (BOAM), was founded by the former US Director, Art Williams, working with fellow independent fundamentalists, and is international in scope. Fred Kornis founded "Heartland International Ministries," which also has a global outreach, conducting evangelism and helps ministries. Sam Frey joined Word of Life in Upstate New York and, to this day, is their evangelism ministries coordinator, active in ongoing open-air evangelism and in training other believers to do the same as detailed earlier in this

chapter. The Ezekiel Project, founded by Chris Schroeder and headquartered in Michigan, is working in evangelism training among the Brethren Assemblies. Joe Toy, also mentioned earlier, founded Open Air Ministries. This ministry conducts open-air evangelism and trains people to share their faith in the Raleigh area and in several states, including outreach at Mardi Gras, sporting events, and beach ministry in Maryland and South Carolina.

## THE DAYS OF COHESION

With the time of testing over during our "days of challenge," OAC-USA was ready to heal, unite, and expand the ministry into new fields. If all this were to succeed, a key ingredient would be fresh leadership with a vision and God's blessing to move us forward as a unified body. We are grateful to God that He has led several such leaders our way. The members listed below have served at some point over the past 30 years. Our new policy stated that a majority vote of current staff elects board members, who may serve no more than six consecutive years, after which they must rotate off for at least one year. This system of electing and rotating encourages new members to join us. It also curbs the tendency for leadership to serve for many years without a break, thereby becoming ingrained and resistant to change. Our initial new board chairman was Rex Trent, whose love for OAC and heartbeat for open-air evangelism were one with ours and continues to this day.



**REX TRENT**

Rex reports, "In 1980, my wife, Carol, and I were serving as youth leaders at a church plant located in the Germantown-Roxborough neighborhoods of Philadelphia. There, we became friends with Bob and Betty Ewerth, as well as their sons, Bob and George. Now, George was young, dashing, and handsome, and Bob, Jr., well, Bob was a missionary with Open Air Campaigners! I remember Bob speaking at our church service and being impressed with his message. Afterward, he spoke to me about helping them (Bob and Dennis King) with a joint OAC-CEF children's program at the East Falls Schuylkill Project. At the time, the OAC Philadelphia office was located at the Roxborough Baptist Church. I would visit on occasion to help set up their computer system and just to visit with the rest of the staff, Karen Boorse and Joe Toy. Perhaps a year later, Bob put together a Philadelphia branch committee. Ted Johnson and I were both asked to serve. I continued as a layperson in this capacity until 1990, when I was invited to join the OAC-USA board of directors. Including required sabbaticals, I remained on the board, serving for the next 30 years (rotating off and on as policy required). After this, I stepped down because I felt that the leadership team needed some new, younger blood better suited to deal with the upcoming issues, such as social media and related, and I was also dealing with my ongoing atrial fibrillation."



**LARRY BAKER**

Larry Baker is also well acquainted with OAC. His connection with us started when he was a teenager. Larry and California staff man, Russ Hodder, became friends in high school and later attended Ventura College. Larry enlisted in the Navy Reserve program, serving on the USS Indianapolis, a communications ship. Russ served in the Army. Interestingly enough, one morning, Russ looked out from his bunker in Vietnam and saw Larry's ship just off the coast! After their military service, both returned to Southern California and have been lifelong friends ever since. Larry's background and experience in banking and as a small business owner have also been quite valuable for OAC. Larry currently lives in the Simi Valley in Southern California.

David Bulkley learned about OAC through Karen Boorse (who later married Chris Williams). Karen and David's wife, Mary, worked together to minister to Cambodian and Vietnamese children in Philadelphia. David worked for 28 years as an attorney at Sunoco Corporation, earning his degree from Villanova University School of Law. We are thankful not only for David's legal background and financial experience but also for his ministry in marriage counseling and conflict management.



**DAVID BULKLEY**



**DANA EDWARDS**

Dana Edwards learned about our mission from staff member Eric Briscoe in the Boston area. Eric has known Dana for most of his life; they attended the same local church and served together on the elder board. Dana also, at times, went with Eric into the open air to conduct ministry and was very familiar with the heartbeat of our mission. Dana was employed by Bose, which manufactures audio equipment, and was able to obtain a 50% discount on sound systems for our staff, not only here in the States but also for

David Proaño to use in our OAC Ecuador outreach. He rotated onto our board for a term of service in the late 1990s.

Tom Garcia's vocation was as a Senior Marketing Representative for the Utica National Insurance Company in the Richmond, Virginia, area. He found out about OAC through his pastor, who put him in touch with our Boston branch. Tom participated in our Sketchboard Evangelism Training in 1998 and was acquainted with staff members Eric Briscoe, Gordon Loop, Aaron Wentz, and Sue MacNeil before serving on the board.



**TOM GARCIA**



**MATT HARVEY**

Matt Harvey has been involved with OAC since he was a teenager! He spent the summer of 1988 in Philadelphia training with Bob Ewerth, Joe Toy, and Karen Boorse. He also worked closely with Gordon Loop and received additional training from Paul Adams. His vocational experience has included designing, implementing, and administering computer networks for the US government. We are blessed to have Matt contributing in a significant way through the years to many projects which helped advance our work. He currently serves as vice-chairman of our national board.

Hugh Holmes and his wife, Susan, live in Maryland. He received his education from Virginia State University and Moody Bible Institute. His working career has included serving as associate pastor and outreach director. He currently works for the US Department of Education as an auditor. Hugh grew up in the church and made a confession of faith at the age of 12. He took our Sketchboard Evangelism Training in 2002 at Lancaster Bible College and has been preaching in the open air for over 20 years here in the US and abroad. He has served OAC in the past as a local branch committeeman and currently serves on the local committee of Child Evangelism Fellowship of Anne Arundel and Prince George's County. Hugh and Susan have been active members in their local church through the years, during which Hugh has used his gifts of evangelism, shepherding, preaching, and teaching.



**HUGH HOLMES**



**GREGG HUNTER**

As a student at Liberty University in Virginia, Gregg Hunter found out about Open Air Campaigners. He volunteered with us as a team member for about four years, served on our Miami spring break outreach team for three years, and even joined our staff as an evangelist in the Baltimore branch in 2010 for a couple of years. God called him to pastor a local church in 2013. As a former OAC staff member and as a pastor, Gregg has given us good counsel on our board, and we appreciate his ongoing interest in and love for this open-air ministry. He currently serves as chairman of our national board.

Bill Kabasenche learned about OAC through his staff position at Lancaster Bible College (LBC) where he ministered as the director of Christian service. He heard firsthand the positive effects of open-air evangelism on the students in the evangelism classes at LBC. Bill's deep commitment to open-air evangelism and his connections at the college were used by the Lord to help our ministry immensely in many ways through the years. Our annual one-week Sketchboard Evangelism Training seminars became an ongoing activity on that campus, and students were assigned open-air outreach ministries throughout the week. Bill's influence was also instrumental in hosting our OAC staff conferences, leadership meetings, and even an OAC International conference in 2004 on the LBC campus.



**BILL KABASENCHE**



**MIKE  
MALSZYCKI**

Through the years, Mike Malszycki has been on staff with us as an evangelist, served as a local branch committee man, and also as a national board member. When on staff, he and his wife, Cindy, ministered in the Minneapolis-St. Paul branch for several years. In 2016, God opened the doors for Mike to minister in Cuba, where he taught a short course called "The Story of God." It was quite a week: teaching, visiting with people from the churches, and even being questioned by Cuban authorities! Mike reports that he discovered the church alive and growing from its decimation in the 1959 revolution. A remnant of believers faithfully carried on since those difficult days, and as a result, the church is now exploding in numbers. Home churches are allowed, and they are quite active and growing. Cuba is not just seeing Christians by addition; the numbers are increasing by multiplication! The people of Cuba and the church still have a way to go before they are free of the many difficulties they face, but they are making progress, and God is blessing them greatly. We are thankful that God used Mike as part of this blessing. Mike continues to be a good friend of Open Air Campaigners. He and Cindy currently live in Iowa.

Like David Wilson, Ed Martin has had a long-term association with OAC as a former evangelist and branch director since the early days of our history here in America. His intimate knowledge of our mission, history, and mode of operation through the years, coupled with his training and experience in Christian counseling, made him a board member who truly understood the daily ministry needs of our staff. Ed and his wife, Joyce, currently live in Tennessee.



**ED MARTIN**



**MATT MARTIN**

Matt Martin is a business owner in Michigan. He and his wife, Vicki, know of us through OAC Michigan director Brian Harmon and his wife, Kimberlee. He was saved at an early age and has been very active in his local church, using his gifts of leadership, teaching, preaching, and pastoral ministry. Matt's heart for this ministry and desire to enable our evangelists to preach the gospel to the lost and mobilize the church have brought about several helpful tools for our staff.

Scott Pope is a graduate of Liberty University. He and his wife, Rhonda, participated in our Sketchboard Evangelism Training at Washington Bible College and interned with Paul Adams and Zane Dempsie in Ocean City, Maryland. They both gained experience in open-air evangelism by being staff members with us for about a year. This time with us, coupled with his self-employed experience, provided Scott with valuable insight that God used during his term of service as a board member.



**SCOTT POPE**



**RANDY RIDDLE**

Randy Riddle is a former Exxon Corporation Marketing Representative who learned about OAC through Bron Carlisle while a student at Columbia Biblical Seminary in South Carolina. He served as an OAC evangelist in South Carolina from 1980 to 1983 and as an associate evangelist from 1983 to 2020. The Lord then led him to minister full time as a pastor, but he continued to be involved on our board as his schedule allowed.

Bob Rennie is a friend of long-time staff member, Russ Hodder. When Russ was our Los Angeles branch director, Bob served on the local branch committee for many years. His background in OAC on the local level served him well as he came on board to help us on the national leadership level. His many years of work as an IRS agent were also quite helpful to us as an organization.



**BOB RENNIE**



**JONATHAN SHADER**

Jonathan Shader discovered OAC soon after moving to California in 2008. Our team was ministering at Birch Street where he saw us and was immediately captivated by the open-air type of evangelism we did. He was trained by Russ Hodder to preach in the open air. Jonathan has a diverse professional background, including working as a certified public accountant. A trip to Nigeria piqued his interest in medical missions and international evangelism. He has since earned his medical degree and established a practice in Arizona, having

completed his residency training in ophthalmology (eye surgery) at The Medical College of Georgia, Augusta University. He has undertaken medical and evangelism missions in Uganda and plans to continue preaching in the open air whenever possible, while also actively participating in medical missions and outreach trips to developing countries. He and Rachelle have two children.

Dan is on the teaching/conducting staff at Liberty University and is a music minister, worship leader, orchestra director, and pianist. He has performed for 45 years as a free-lance pianist (soloist and accompanist), accordionist, and conductor in various venues. Dan found out about us while a student at Moody Bible Institute in 1972-1973, when he would visit Rush Street with a team periodically on weekends. He reconnected with us and served as our on-campus recruiter for Liberty students interested in open-air ministry. Dan, his wife, Gloria, and daughter, Hannah, have occasionally accompanied some teams to the Ocean City boardwalks (New Jersey and Maryland), Boston, New York, Baltimore, and Silver Spring. He and his family live in Lynchburg, Virginia.



**DAN SUTTLES**



**JOE TOY**

Joe Toy was on staff with us in the Philadelphia area. Although he left OAC to form a separate evangelistic organization, Open Air Ministries, during our days of challenge, he continues to love this ministry and our staff. His background as an accountant, experience as an evangelist, and knowledge of OAC as a staff member make him a valuable asset to our leadership team.

Having learned about OAC through Bob Ewerth, Dave Trout and his wife, Janel, have worked full time as missionaries at multiple Christian camps for over 25 years. Before coming on our board, Dave assisted us by hosting many leadership meetings and staff conferences at Mt. Gilead Camp and Conference Center, where he served as director for several years. This camp setting in the beautiful Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania was an ideal meeting place for us, as it was located near our Central Services office. It provided a quiet, relaxing atmosphere for conducting various OAC conferences and meetings. Dave currently serves as director of advancement at Spruce Lake Camp and Conference Center in Monroe County, Pennsylvania.



**DAVE TROUT**

Even though it's good to have new leadership with a fresh vision, it's equally important to have the stability provided by seasoned leadership, which is precisely what we have in David Wilson. David served for a time on our new board and provided insight on issues based on first-hand OAC knowledge and a track record of open-air ministry experience. More about David can be found in chapter 47.



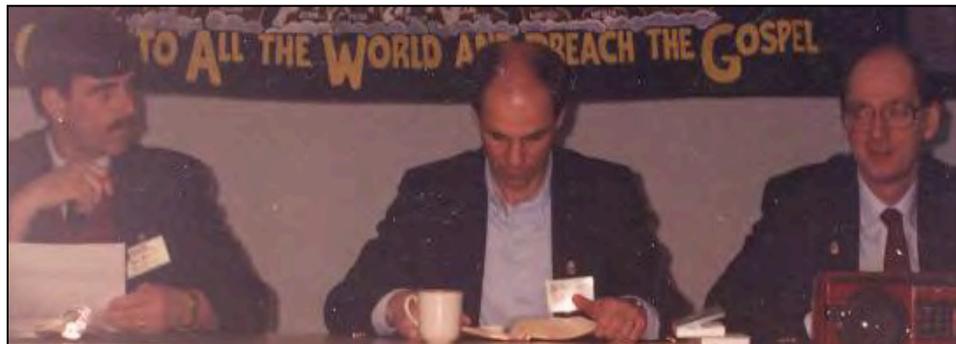
**DAVID WILSON**

We are grateful to God for the outstanding leadership provided by His good hand and look forward to the days ahead as the Lord continues to add new members who have a love for Him and a concern for our staff.



It is good to have accountability as Christians in our personal lives. Our new OAC leadership acknowledged that it is equally important to have responsibility as a non-profit organization. With this in mind, the new leadership of OAC-USA continued our membership with the Association of North American Missions, which began in 1983. This accountability group has a code of ethics that member missions are to follow to maximize their effectiveness. The four core values include accountability to God and each other, being connected with those who understand and encourage our ministry life, growing through resources and relationships, and being stretched to consider new ministry opportunities. We remained members in good standing with ANAM for many years until a firm alternative accountability network was established.

With a new board in place to establish policy for our USA work, a management team was activated to carry out the day-to-day leadership tasks.

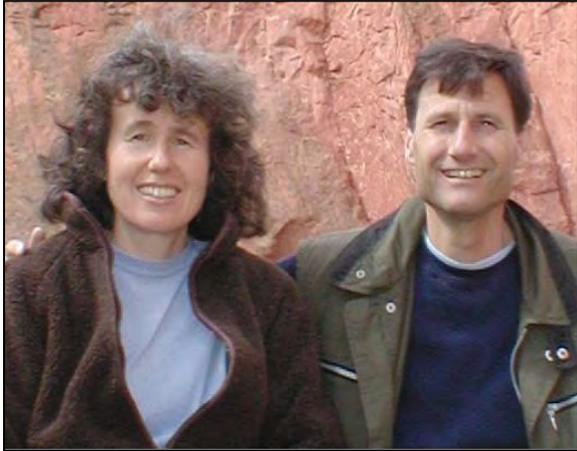


**BOB EWERTH**

**ERIC BRISCOE**

**JOHN CUTLIP**

This team was composed of Bob Ewerth in Philadelphia (Training Director), Eric Briscoe in Boston (Field Director), and John Cutlip in New Jersey (Central Services Director). It was now time for our days of cohesion to continue as we looked to God for additional staff of His choosing. The following section of this chapter is a general timeline recounting how He brought additional staff our way.



**SHOSHANNA & KURT SCHAFLI**

Kurt Schafli was saved during the Christmas season in 1975 at the age of 21. He was attending the first European Youth Conference for Missions in Lausanne, Switzerland, and the following week, he felt God calling him into full-time service. Instead of remaining in banking, his field of training and expertise, he went to England, studied language, and took courses at Capernwray Bible School and London Bible College. During this time, he married Shoshanah, and they helped out at the House of Rest, a Christian guest house, as interim wardens.

They also visited a Kibbutz in Israel, assisted farmers, worked in mission offices, and helped prepare for the 1980 Second European Youth Conference for Missions.

It was during this time at the youth conference that God called them into full-time service with OAC. God also used Kurt's language skills at the conference to guide them into OAC work, translating from English into German and French simultaneously. This answered Kurt's prayer that he would join a mission that wanted to use ALL of his God-given talents. Three years later, after OAC training in Germany and England, he was appointed to represent OAC at the third European Youth Conference for Missions.

Opening up OAC Switzerland in 1985 also allowed Kurt to use all his gifts, including bookkeeping and developing new ideas that needed to be adapted to the Swiss culture. In 1991, Kurt and Shoshanah, along with their three children, Lukas, Rebekka, and Ephriam, were seconded to OAC-USA, where they began ministering to Native Americans in Wyoming. In 2003, Paul and Karen Dodson came on staff for a short time, assisting in the Wyoming ministry.

Shoshanah was promoted to heaven in 2022. As of this writing, there are eight Schafli grandchildren: Sayde, Heidi, Nadiyah, Isaac, Samuel, Elliot, Felix, and Clara, and one great-grandchild, Adonis Micah.



It has been over 34 years since the Schafli's came to America. Much ministry has occurred in prisons and in the open air of Fremont County and the Wind River Indian Reservation, where they have lived. As a result of the COVID-19 days, with the help of Allen Peil, some house churches were established. Many of those attending these house churches have been reached through the Sonshine Clubs and/or Bible Camps started by Kurt and his team. Many house church members now bring their children to the meetings. The homeless outreach continues, which Kurt calls 'Street Church.' For an extended account of Kurt's ministry, see chapter 40, which describes the history of OAC Switzerland.

### **Frontline Story**

Kurt Schafli conducts a variety of gospel outreach ministries. One particular day, he was at a park where some young folks were playing basketball. Once the game was over, the kids sat down and watched as Kurt presented a clear gospel sketchboard message. One of the oldest boys helped read Bible passages, and at the end of the meeting, everyone received a Bible. Additional literature was also available for those who already owned a Bible. What a blessing it is to reach non-churched young people in the communities and neighborhoods in this way, where our OAC staff minister regularly. Some of these kids have never had the gospel explained to them before. Kurt also has the opportunity to minister in group homes where young people in his area who get into trouble are sent. He also conducts Bible Camps and other organized meetings geared toward evangelism and discipleship.

Gordon Loop learned about our mission as a student at Word of Life Bible Institute in Upstate New York. He participated in our Sketchboard Evangelism Training and joined our Boston team on staff in 1992. In 2000, Gordon transitioned to our Baltimore branch. During this period in OAC Baltimore's history, Rick Elder and Chad Foor briefly ministered with us. Chad was looking through the links on Ray Comfort's Living Waters website in 2005 and came across our OAC website. From that contact, he felt the call of God to apply for a short-term summer of service with us. He applied and was able to serve from June through July of that year. Gordon married Beth-Eden, and God blessed



**BETH-EDEN & GORDON LOOP**

them with three children, Micayla, Justin, and Wesley. In 2007, the Lord led the Loops to leave OAC and attend seminary for further Bible training. After graduating in 2014, he served as senior pastor for five years at Calvary Baptist Church in Dedham, Massachusetts. His experience as a former OAC staff member and in pastoral ministry prepared him to serve on our board of directors for a couple of terms. Gordon and Beth-Eden currently live in North Carolina.

In an effort to strengthen our accountability network even beyond the association we had as a member of ANAM described earlier, in 1992, we also became a member of the



Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA). Billy Graham and other evangelical leaders founded this accountability group, which, as of this writing, has over 2,600 leading churches and ministry members. ECFA serves as our financial accountability partner as we operate within a network of high standards required by each member organization.

Tom Knox grew up in New Hampshire. As a serviceman in the Air Force, a Mormon began reading the Scriptures to him, which God used to set him on his journey to the ultimate truth! Tom reached the point of placing his trust in Christ alone for his salvation, but did not start a regular fellowship in a local church for four years. At a church retreat, he recommitted himself fully to the Lord, now knowing a bit more what a relationship with God was all about. Soon after that, he started going into Boston on Saturdays, playing his cornet and witnessing to people. Three years later, still witnessing in Boston, Tom moved there to be a street evangelist, convinced that this was God's leading. There, on the streets of Boston, he discovered our Open Air Campaigners team. After working with Eric Briscoe and Gordon Loop that summer, he



enrolled in a one-year Bible instruction program at Word of Life Bible Institute in Upstate New York. Upon graduation in 1994, he joined our Los Angeles branch, where he ministered with Russ Hodder and his team. For the next six years, God used him in OAC before he moved on. Tom is married to Norma, and they now live in Texas, still grateful for the time he had with us.

Melissa McCoy began volunteering at our Central Services office in Nazareth after learning about the need for administrative help through John and Sue Cutlip. Melissa, John, and Sue attended the same local church, where the Cutlips became good friends with Melissa and her family. She had experience working in a local insurance office and was glad to volunteer regularly for many years. She was promoted to heaven in 2019.



In the mid-1990s, new technology was developed, which we were able to integrate into our administrative routine, helping the ministry function more efficiently. Cell phones, computers, and portable digital assistants (PDAs) were becoming more commonplace and affordable. Until 1995, all our financial records were maintained by hand in ledger books, and receipts with personalized thank-you notes were handwritten and sent faithfully by Olga Kruck until she retired after nearly three decades of service. Beginning in 1990, John Cutlip spent about five years traveling back and forth between the OAC offices in Nazareth, Pennsylvania, and Wheaton, Illinois, becoming familiar with how our bookkeeper, Ralph Coglianesse, tracked all our financial details. During these five years, John gradually transitioned our information-keeping to a computerized platform so that by 1995, we could consolidate the Wheaton and Nazareth offices. After many years of service, Ralph also retired, and we closed the Wheaton location, which had served us well since the 1950s.

Larry Tiss worked many years for the railroad. In 1995, at age 40, the Lord prompted him to join us as an evangelist working in New York City. He was based in Brooklyn but



**LARRY TISS**

worked with our New York-New Jersey team, which included ministry outreach to much of the New York City metropolitan area. During his ten years as a staff member, he was a great blessing and help not only to us but to many local churches in the New York City area. Looking back at his time with OAC, Larry shares the following. "It was a very good experience, and I am very grateful to God for it. I highly recommend that anyone who is willing to lay it all on the line get involved in evangelism and go to whatever mission and place God calls you. You will never regret it."

Peter O'Driscoll was saved at the age of 10 through the influence of Paul Merritts, a pastor in Washington D.C.'s Georgetown district, whose church was on young Peter's paper route. The pastor befriended him as a young lad who had received little spiritual nurturing at home and led him to Christ. Peter's father left home about the time Peter was saved, and without a father's good influence, he eventually fell in with the wrong crowd. Peter used drugs, and there was even a time he slept on the streets of Washington. He knew all along he was straying from the Lord. In March 1978, Peter was in a severe auto accident. Of the six people in the car, he was the only one injured; his neck was broken in two places. When he woke up in the hospital, it was clear that he would be permanently



**PETER & ISABEL O'DRISCOLL**

paralyzed, but he also knew God was giving him one more chance to live a godly life. A year later, he made A's and B's as a pastoral ministry major at Liberty Baptist College in Lynchburg, Virginia. Peter met Isabel Driscoll there and persuaded her to add an "O" to her last name! They joined our staff in 1996, working in the greater Orlando, Florida, area, and have three girls: Katie, Michaela, and Anastasia.



During his time on staff with us, God has given Peter a variety of ministry venues, all closely connected to the local church. For several years, God used him in the Orlando Children's Church ministry. This outreach used several school buses, some with attractive, customized paint jobs, to pick up children from the inner-city area of Orlando and transport them to a local church for biblical instruction, a meal, and loving attention.

His wheelchair has not hampered him from "Presenting Christ By All Means Everywhere" and has more than once been an excellent object lesson he uses to point folks to Christ.

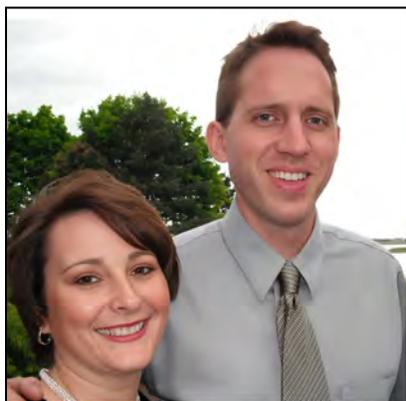
In 1997, Sue Cutlip's parents, Clayton (CJ) and Mae Bebout, moved to Pennsylvania. They were advancing in years, and Sue's father also had some health issues, which made maintaining their home in Northeast Ohio increasingly difficult. John and Sue invited CJ and Mae to move in with them. This arrangement turned out to work quite well, as our OAC Central Services office was based in the Cutlip home, and the Bebouts were willing and able to help out in the ministry. Sue's mom was particularly helpful in the office and in preparing open-air supplies for inventory and shipping. Over the years, our staff have developed several evangelism tools to use in the open air. Items such as sketchboards, paints, books, manuals, paint brushes, ropes, and various object lessons allow us to effectively communicate the gospel message to the lost, many of which we build in-house. We are glad to make these items available to others outside our USA family, including those we train, members of other missions, and OAC staff in different parts of the world. CJ would often help construct and assemble sketchboards and build leg kits, which was a great help to us.



***CJ & MAE BUILDING BOARDS***

## FUN FACT #6

We offer over 80 open-air presentation items through our Central Services office in Nazareth. Through the years, in addition to shipping items throughout the USA, including Alaska and Hawaii, we have equipped believers with our tools of evangelism who minister in Australia, Bahamas, Belgium, Bermuda, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, El Salvador, Fiji Islands, Finland, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Mexico, New Zealand, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Romania, Russia, Scotland, Singapore, Spain, Sweden and Ukraine.



**TONYA & AARON WENTZ**

Aaron Wentz trusted Christ while studying music as a percussion major at the Interlochen Arts Academy in northern Michigan. His conversion was so profound that he immediately started telling people about Jesus and joined two music groups touring the USA, sharing his testimony. In 1994, he attended Moody Bible Institute in Chicago and graduated with a Bachelor's in Evangelism and Discipleship. During missions week at Moody, Aaron learned about Open Air Campaigners from Eric Briscoe, who was there representing our mission. In 1997, Aaron and his wife, Tonya, joined our staff, ministering in the Boston branch. Beginning as a staff evangelist, Aaron was appointed the director in 2001. In 2011, he graduated from Biola University in Southern California with a Master's degree in Christian Apologetics. In 2013, he moved back to Michigan, where he worked with our Michigan director, Brian Harmon. In 2015, the Lord called Aaron to leave OAC. He continues to conduct evangelistic outreach on the college campus and also founded The Michigan School of Apologetics. His 18 years of experience in OAC talking to college students, professors, scientists, Muslims, atheists, Hindus, and everyone in between prepared him well for this new field of ministry. He and Tonya have two children and currently live in Michigan, where Aaron is a campus missionary with Reliant, serving with Riverview Church at Michigan State University.



## Frontline Story

While on staff with us, Aaron Wentz did much college campus outreach. Here is a story he shared with us about one opportunity God brought his way.

"Michigan State University (MSU) is one of the largest universities in America, pulling students from around the country and the world, especially Chinese students. Just from being out on campus with our sketchboard, I have had one Chinese student listen intently and afterward say he wanted a Bible. Another Chinese student, who is only 17 years old, has met with me twice to learn more about God. Yet another Chinese student here to study has met with me twice. After giving her her first English/Chinese Bible, she emailed me: 'These days, I am beginning to read the Bible you gave me. I started in the New Testament. There are some amazing stories about Jesus. He cured all the illnesses and helped the sick. How great he is! I am quite interested in this book. Thanks again for bringing the book to me. I can always find great wisdom in it. It also helps me to think more about my life and the world. You must have been sent to me by Jesus. Thanks so much!'"

The year 2000 ushered in a worldwide period of technological change, revolutionizing the way we lived, worked, communicated, and conducted ministry. This time in history gave us camera phones, USB flash drives, Bluetooth, iPods, the video gaming revolution, LinkedIn, and more. The gospel message always remains the same, but the manner and methods used to communicate this truth should always be advancing. For example, there was a time in our OAC history when sharing the gospel with the lost involved horses as the primary mode of transportation to and from our open-air meeting sites. Over time, this was replaced with the horseless carriage, and today our evangelists fly through the air and are swept to meeting locations by swift subway trains. Change can be good, especially God-empowered spiritual change, which should produce growth and maturity. In the USA, during the early 2000s, our leadership desired that we grow not only in the number of additional staff and expand into new fields, but also in our vision and internal development as an organization. God used a Christian advisory group named Ambassadors Advisors (now called Faithward Advisors) and three key men to help us fulfill the desire we had to strengthen the organizational development and financial stability of OAC-USA.



Tom Swan was the first man consulted to get us started. He was no stranger to our mission, being the former OAC International president and Canadian director. This previous involvement with us provided an intimate knowledge of all things OAC (see chapter 10 for more details). In addition, his leadership experience with other missions such as Christian Service Brigade, numerous local churches, and several other Christian organizations gave him extensive experience and keen insight in developing and implementing ministry strategy, which he graciously shared with us. God used this man in a significant way as we continued to grow.



**TOM SWAN**

The second man we contacted was Dr. Donald Urey, whose ministry background included serving as professor of Bible and theology and dean of students at Lancaster Bible College, professor and chairman of the pastoral studies department at Philadelphia College of Bible, academic dean, executive vice president, and president of Calvary Bible College in Kansas City, Missouri. He also served as general director of Berean Mission in St. Louis, Missouri. He was the pastor of Hydewood Park Baptist Church in New Jersey during the days when OAC staff Sam and Sherry Frey and John and Sue Cutlip attended. Dr. Urey evaluated our legal documents and recommended modifications to optimize efficiency and ensure continued good standing with the organizational standards of the time.



**DR. UREY**

Then, in 2002, our board appointed Bill Kabasenche and Bob Ewerth to contact former Lancaster Bible College president Gil Peterson about conducting not only an organizational evaluation but also a recommended protocol for us to follow to achieve our goals. Dr. Peterson served as president of Lancaster Bible College from 1979 to 1999 and as chancellor until 2005. He held prior positions on the faculty and administration of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, and Philadelphia College of Bible (now Cairn University). As an ordained minister, he was sought after as a speaker for churches, schools, civic organizations, and businesses. He also consulted frequently, specializing in leadership and management, as well as Christian education. A prolific writer, Dr. Peterson published books, monographs, training film strips, and videos. He is listed in *Who's Who in American Education*, *Outstanding Educators in America*, *Presidents and Deans of American Colleges and Universities*, *Community Leaders*, and



**DR. PETERSON**

Noteworthy Americans, and received the Founders York Award from New York University. This diverse background and vast knowledge base made Dr. Peterson the perfect man to advise us. In 2003, he agreed to help evaluate the OAC-USA ministry, thus becoming the third key man God used to help strengthen our organizational development here in the States.

Over the next year, with Dr. Peterson's expertise and guidance, much groundwork was laid to develop a strategic plan to accurately reflect our mission, vision, goals, objectives, and core values. During the year, an intense schedule was established to formulate and implement the details necessary to make our strategic plan a reality. Our board of directors worked closely with the management team on this endeavour, and by 2004, our strategic plan was fully developed, ratified by an official board vote, and implemented.



**PAUL**

Paul and Judy Zagrobski joined our staff in the Boston branch in 2000. He suffered for many years with liver cancer and complications from Hepatitis C. Still, he kept a positive attitude. He was always eager to be in the open air with our OAC Boston team, sharing the gospel. The joy of the Lord was Paul's constant strength, as evidenced by a perpetual cheerful mood.



**JUDY**

The Lord promoted Paul to heaven in 2013. His 13 years on staff with us were used by God to touch the lives of many. Eric Briscoe and other OAC Boston staff attended his funeral, where Eric was invited to speak and to present the gospel, based on Paul's favorite subway message, based on John 3:16.



### **Frontline Story**

One day, our staff in the Boston area spoke to a veteran police officer from the city who stopped by one of our open-air meetings at the Boston University campus. After 15 years on the force, he became discouraged and disillusioned about who he had become. He said, "I had become like the people I was arresting." He quit the force and became a recluse in his home, not wanting to face society. He said, "I have not told anyone but my wife, but I attempted suicide." He had also signed up for a psychology

class at Boston University to determine for himself the cause of his distressing frame of mind. It was during this time of his life that we met him. The 45-minute conversation with our staff left him with a desire to search the Scriptures. This account of such a divine appointment in the open air illustrates how actively God pursues the lost. We are grateful to be used as His instruments in this process.



**SUE MACNEIL**

Sue MacNeil joined our Boston branch in July 2000. Here is a report she gives of her journey.

"For many years of my life, I wondered where I would go when I died. I never found out the truth until I was 35 years old! Up until that time, I thought heaven could be earned by being a good person. My sister, Ellen, said one day, 'Susan, if you can earn heaven, then why did Jesus Christ suffer and die?' That question really made me think, and I began to search the Scriptures for the truth. In 1985, I repented of my sins and trusted in Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Savior.

"In 1989, I started attending a Bible-preaching and teaching church. Being in a Bible study and hearing God's Word taught every Sunday caused me to grow in my faith. At this church, there was an evangelist named Eric Briscoe, who was a missionary with Open Air Campaigners. One Sunday during church, Eric asked the congregation if anyone was interested in going to Boston to share their faith with people on the streets. I went and found street witnessing to be scary but very exciting. I did this on and off for ten years until God called me to this ministry full time.

"In 1999, the Lord prompted me to quit my job of 20 years and attend Washington Bible College. I did this and earned my Bible Certificate.

"Since July of 2000, I have been on the streets of Boston doing open-air evangelism. In ministering to adults, we paint on a sketchboard until a crowd gathers. The gospel is then preached. If people are interested, I will counsel with them one-on-one. I also run a Bible correspondence school for people we meet who are interested in learning more about God in a personal and intimate way. In between gospel presentations, I hand out tracts and often get to talk with people. We have three children's Bible clubs every week throughout the winter. Also in the winter, we go down into the subway to preach and teach God's Word, and every ten minutes,



with the trains coming and going, we have a new congregation! We pass out many tracts in the subway, too.

“Hundreds upon hundreds of unbelievers hear the gospel preached every day who may never enter the doors of a church. We take God’s command literally to “Go...!” We go where the people are.”

Sue MacNeil retired in November 2012 but still lives in the Boston area. She continues to love and support OAC's work.

### **FUN FACT #7**

**In an effort to make it as easy, convenient, and secure as possible for our financial donors and supplies customers here in the States, we began accepting credit card donations by phone request in 2000. Before this time, all incoming donations and payments were by paper check sent to us by snail mail.**



**CHIP & KIM WOLFE**

Chip and Kim Wolfe came to know the Lord on the same day in 1993, after a co-worker invited Chip to a local church service. Since then, the Lord has used them in door-to-door ministry, youth work, and short-term missions. Highlights of their Christian service involvement include outreach at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta and an evangelistic trip to the Philippines in 2000.

They learned about OAC's effective open-air evangelism method using the sketchboard, at a training and outreach event in upstate New York. Chip felt God's leading to pursue full-time involvement in this type of evangelism, researched the possibility of a career position with us, and joined our staff in 2000. During their time with us, Chip and Kim have ministered with our Philadelphia team for two years, nine years at Central Services in Nazareth, Pennsylvania, three years at ALACCA Bible Camp in Idaho, and nine years in our Dallas, Texas, branch before moving to the Central Pennsylvania branch, where they are currently located. Since 2004, they have also been involved in an annual summer camp ministry at River of Life in Vermont. Since they came on staff, Kim has been very involved in street outreach, assists in training others for ministry, joins the team at college campuses, and teaches at River of Life camp alongside Chip. Kim also took the Sketchboard Evangelism Training at Lancaster Bible College the year after they came on staff.



**CHIP WOLFE SHARING CHRIST**

These days, Chip's ministry includes providing pulpit supply, leading effective open-air outreach, conducting one-on-one witnessing instruction, organizing evangelism training, participating in Vacation Bible School programs, and attending

mission conferences. God has also gifted him with the ability to build valuable evangelism tools for use in the open air. For example, Chip developed and built a collapsible LED blacklight unit with the help of David Drennan, the unit's architect. Chip modified the light to create what he calls a "bayonet-style" design, which he began building around 2012. It's a great portable unit that illuminates the sketchboard surface, allowing a gospel message painted on the sketchboard using ultraviolet paint to glow brightly, thereby attracting and keeping an audience's attention. The unit can be disassembled without tools and conveniently stowed away for easy transport and airline travel. This development represented a significant improvement over our previous blacklight unit, which utilized glass tubes and was prone to damage during transportation. Chip also custom builds and produces several other evangelism tools, including object lessons, folding sketchboard units, sketchboard leg kits, and full-sized sketchboards equipped with wheels called "preach-o-matics." In recent days, a newly acquired 3D printer has enabled Chip to produce custom-made object lessons on demand.



**KIM AT THE SKETCHBOARD**

## **Frontline Story**

Chip and Kim Wolfe take time each year to minister at a children's camp in Vermont. We rejoice at the following note that Chip and Kim received from the camp.

"I wanted to give you praise for your time at River Of Life this summer. A young man received Christ while being there with you (his dad works with my husband and is not a Christian). His son was witnessing to his dad and his mom (they are divorced) and to some of the guys at his father's work. He also insisted that he wanted to attend church

every week and read his Bible daily. It is wonderful to see this young man in action. Thank you for all you do to share Christ!"



**DIANE & RICHARD BURLEY**

When Richard Burley was 11 years old, he was sent away from home for not obeying the law. His mother loved the Lord and worked closely with Richard's probation officer, which ultimately led to him being sent to a Christian boys' home. There, the Lord used the many spiritual seeds planted to work in his heart. It took many years for these spiritual seeds to mature, but after he married Diane and reached age 37, he turned his life over to God.

In 2001, Richard and Diane's pastor invited Open Air Campaigners to their missions conference. God used the guest speaker to encourage the Burleys' church to venture into the open air and share their faith. Richard and Diane signed up to attend a one-day evangelism outreach in Boston. They were overwhelmed by the multitude of lost people in that city; God used that experience to call them into full-time ministry. This call continued to be confirmed as they ministered regularly with our staff until they became convinced that God wanted them to serve Him in the New Hampshire and Massachusetts area through OAC in a full-time capacity. They joined our staff in 2002



**SUPERMARKETS**

and ministered in the New England area for the next 10 years. In 2012, they answered the call of God to reopen the New York City branch of OAC and moved to the Coney Island section of that metropolis, where much fruitful outreach and ministry took place. Then, in 2018, they relocated to the Tampa area in Florida, where they continued working with local churches, train teams, and lead outreach daily.



**FLEA MARKETS**



**SUBWAYS**

Richard and Diane are totally committed to sharing Christ with the lost. It is not uncommon for witnessing sessions to take place at everyday locations, such as the supermarket, in the subway system, at flea markets, in living rooms,



**POLICE OFFICERS**



**DRIVE THRU'S**

and even while picking up lunch at the drive-thru! Richard and Diane are prime examples of our OAC motto and model every day what it means to "Present Christ By All Means Everywhere!"



**EVEN SUPERHEROS NEED JESUS!**

**FUN FACT #8**

**In 2004, the USA board voted to research teleconferencing capabilities as a potential means of conducting future board and management team meetings.**

Mark Kennedy grew up in East Texas. In 1986, he moved from Texas to Idaho to pursue a career as a professional hunting and whitewater rafting guide, which he was blessed



**ANGELA & MARK KENNEDY**

to do for over 20 years. Mark met Angela in 1995, and they married the following year. Through reading God's Word, both were convicted to follow Christ and began seeking what He would have them do.

Mark began researching mission organizations, came across OAC, and sent in an inquiry email. A prompt reply from John Cutlip set the path to attending the 2004 Boston Sketchboard Evangelism Training followed by Orientation/ Candidate School in Philadelphia that year.

The year 2005 brought big changes: Mark and Angela sold their guide business and home in Winchester, Idaho, where the nearest neighbor was half a mile away. They moved with their two children, Dirk and Bailey, to Baltimore, Maryland, where the closest neighbor was the thickness of a wall away! This was the beginning of a three-year internship in the Baltimore-DC OAC branch under the tutelage of the branch director, Paul Adams.



Plans to establish an OAC branch in Seattle, Washington, were set aside when it became clear that God had other plans. In 2008, Mark was seconded to ALACCA Bible Camp in Harpster, Idaho, to be the camp director. Mark and the family served at the camp for five years.

In 2013, the Kennedys established the Inland Northwest branch of OAC, covering a vast area that includes Eastern Washington and North and Central Idaho, with seven college campuses. Ministry in this area continues to grow and develop.



**ANDREW KERIN**

Over the years, Mark, through the Inland NW branch college ministry, has mentored and discipled many young people. One of these was Andrew Kerin, whom Mark met on the campus of Washington State University. Andrew was raised in Siberia, Russia, where his parents were missionaries. Having a heart for evangelism, Andrew sought out further training from Mark and spent a year as an OAC intern with the Inland Northwest branch. One month before the COVID-19 lockdowns began, some of our OAC staff, including Andrew, headed to Florida for outreach ministry. A portion of that ministry took place in a migrant neighborhood,

which was very poor; the kids dressed in tatters, many were barefoot, trash was everywhere, and all the homes were made of old trailers. Andrew shared the following. "When we showed up for our open-air kids' club and announced to the whole neighborhood that we would be playing games, giving prizes, and teaching kids about Jesus, I had expected resistance from the adults. To my surprise, all of the adults I interacted with were very grateful for how we were blessing their kids! May I never forget the last day when Sandro prayed, telling God in his own words how he was bad, needed Jesus, and believed in Him for forgiveness. It filled my heart with joy seeing his tiny mouth move silently in prayer." Andrew has a burden for the unborn and eventually founded an anti-abortion non-profit organization, which he named Tiny Heartbeat Ministries. He currently serves as president of this organization.

One unique method of ministry that Mark Kennedy has developed for use in small-town settings is to ride his mule and hand out tracts. This is a very effective way to distribute God's Word, especially at community events and other local gatherings.



## Frontline Story

We love to assist local churches in becoming effective in open-air evangelism and do our best to train and support them whenever possible. Some time ago, Mark Kennedy had an opportunity to train Pastor Keith Weaver. Mark met with his team and two other churches in Colorado. Pastor Weaver wrote to us, thanking the Lord, for using Mark to help transform his local church, which is in a rural location centered between three towns. The people caught the vision for reaching people outside the church, and over a few months, they went out to local football stadiums and set up outreach tents. The response was overwhelming, and folks in these local towns heard a clear presentation of the Word of God and were given the opportunity to trust Christ as Savior.

### **FUN FACT #9**

**In 2006, a final agreement was reached with the city of Baltimore regarding our right to conduct open-air meetings in the Inner Harbor area. This location had proven to be an extremely fruitful venue for holding evangelistic meetings, and for many years, we had enjoyed the liberty to conduct outreach there. In the early 2000s, police officers barred our staff from holding meetings at the Inner Harbor boardwalk, known as the Promenade. A Christian litigation organization, the American Liberties Institute (ALI), offered to represent us in a legal challenge to the City of Baltimore regarding the ban on our outreach efforts. Staff members Paul Adams, Gordon Loop, and board member Matt Harvey collaborated with the ALI team, resulting in a positive outcome for us. In March 2006, our board voted to accept the City of Baltimore's proposal, and we resumed holding open-air meetings in this prime downtown Baltimore location.**

By this time in our history, God has used our board of directors, working with the management team, to provide many years of leadership stability here in the USA. In 2007, as the board considered ways to be even more organized and efficient, there was openness to adding a key leadership position, general director, to our leadership team. With this in mind, it was agreed to begin the search process for a man to fill this role. Having a general director would mean that the key leadership of our daily work would be in the hands of one person instead of three, as it currently is through the management team. As with any management style, there were pros and cons to consider. The qualifications of such a person to fit our needs would be many, including being a man of God's choosing, familiar with our work, and having a vision and passion for open-air evangelism. A job description was created along with search criteria, and prayers began for the person of God's choosing to be revealed in His timing; thus, the quest began. After several years with no prospects, the search slowed in intensity, although the openness to God's leading in this matter continues to the present day.



***RICK & DOVIE MOORE***

Rick Moore wasn't raised in a Christian home and only attended church a few times. On one of those occasions, as a teenager, he made a profession of faith but was not truly born again because of a lack of genuine repentance. After graduating from high school, Rick became a police officer. In 1989, while working undercover, he attended a church service. He realized that he was separated from God and was convicted that he needed to put his complete trust in Christ, forsaking his sinful lifestyle. It was at this point that he was truly born again.

Realizing the great gift of salvation needed to be shared, Rick immediately began telling others about his faith, becoming involved in outreach programs at his church whenever and wherever he could.

Dovie wasn't raised in a Christian home either. She also made a false profession in her teenage years after attending church with a friend. In 1999, as she observed God's changes in Rick's life and heard him testify at a church service, Dovie repented of her sins and became a born-again believer.



God worked in the Moores' lives over the next several years. In 2006, feeling God's call to a ministry of public evangelism, Rick



and Dovie attended our one-week Sketchboard Evangelism Training in Boston, Massachusetts. About a month after returning home and praying, they felt God was leading them to become staff evangelists with OAC. They completed the application process and were approved in February 2007 to become staff interns. They moved to Boston in September of that year to begin their two-year internship training. Then, in 2009, their training was complete, so they returned to Dallas, Texas, where they both grew up, to establish an OAC branch in that location. They continue to faithfully minister in this capacity in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex area.

It is always a pleasure to have fellow OAC workers from other parts of the world visit America. In 2008, Australian staff members Wes and Diane Fittell, along with their son, Tom, came to the USA. While here, they visited with John and Sue Cutlip at Central Services on their way to the Midwest, where they stopped by the Creation Museum, founded by a fellow Australian, Ken Ham. Here is the report Ken posted on his website regarding the Fittell visit.

“On Monday this week, I was pleasantly surprised to meet up with two special visitors



**DIANE, TOM, & WES FITTELL**

to the Creation Museum. Wes and Diane Fittell work with a mission organization in Australia (founded in Australia but now reaching around the world) called Open Air Campaigners. This visit was extra special to me for a number of reasons: First, I am an Australian (as most of you know), and my parents used to host OAC workers in our Australian home, as these dedicated Christian workers ran special programs in the towns where we lived (in Queensland).

“It was at an OAC program for children in Innisfail, North Queensland (when we lived in a town called Mundoo), where at around 10 years of age, I went forward at a meeting in response to the challenge from the OAC worker to be a missionary for the Lord. At that time, I committed to the Lord that I would go wherever He wanted me to and be a missionary for Him. Little did I know that meant being called as a missionary to the USA to call the church and culture back to the authority of the Word of God, be a founder of Answers in Genesis, and see the vision of the Creation Museum become a reality. Wes and Diane Fittell attend a church in Australia where dear friends of ours and some of our family members attend.”



**WES & DIANE WITH KEN HAM**



**MIKE & RENAE BUSSEN**

Before joining the staff of OAC-USA, Mike and Renae Bussen served in our Canadian work for over 17 years. A detailed account of their call and early ministry can be found in Chapter 10. Their move to minister with us in the USA in 2008 answered a long-time prayer for additional administrative help in our Nazareth, Pennsylvania, Central Services office. John and Sue Cutlip had been ministering alone at this task for nearly 20 years, so we were delighted to have Mike

and Renae on board to help share the workload. Mike soon grasped the daily routine of administrative tasks to be completed, which enabled John to concentrate on special projects and involvement with the management team.

Renae is also an excellent open-air worker, and together, she and Mike make a great team. Sometime ago, Renae was thrilled to lead two young sisters, Kim and Fevin, into the kingdom. Their family is from Eritrea, Africa. It's incredible how the Lord brings people from all over the world to us to hear the gospel message! One of the sisters responded to an open-air gospel presentation but quickly left the meeting area with her sister before anyone could speak with them. Renae was concerned and prayed they would return, and they did!

It turned out that the sisters had left because one of them began crying, feeling convicted by the consideration of God, whom she was trying to avoid. Renae and another worker were ready for them when they returned. The sisters asked many sincere questions, and after some discussion, they decided to receive the Lord! Truly, this is another example of a divine appointment!



**MIKE MINISTERING - 2009**



**LAURIE & ZANE DEMPSIE**

Zane trusted the Lord at a very early age. In August 1993, he married Laurie, and in God's timing, they were blessed with four children: Zana, Ethan, Zoran, and Aria. In 2003, Zane rededicated his life to the Lord and began redefining his identity in Christ. He began to grow, attended Bible studies, and became very active in his church. He realized the need to share the incredible power of God with others and began witnessing to those around him. Through a friend, Chad Floor, Zane learned about Open Air Campaigners.

He participated in our one-week Sketchboard Evangelism Training at Washington Bible College. During the week, Zane discussed the work with our staff and felt the Lord confirm a leading to join us. He filled out an application, and in 2008, he and Laurie attended the OAC Orientation/Candidate School in Philadelphia. Afterward, the OAC board officially approved them as staff members.

In July 2009, they moved to Silver Spring, Maryland, where Zane served as an evangelist in the Baltimore-Washington branch for the next five years. The time spent in Maryland was valuable in learning about the daily routine of this ministry under an established branch director and what it takes to maintain an effective long-term ministry.

Then in August 2013, the Lord led Zane and his family back to Central Pennsylvania, where he was born and raised. In 2016, Zane was appointed as the branch director and welcomed Ed and Debbie Neimann as co-workers that same year. Rebecca Jefferson (who later married Jimmy Coates) joined the Central Pennsylvania team in 2020. Chip and Kim Wolfe were added in 2023 after relocating from our work in Dallas.



### **Frontline Story**

Zane Dempsie shares how he met a young man named Shawn on the streets of State College while conducting a Friday night ministry. It was Shawn's first year in college, and it was not going well for him. Shawn shared many things with Zane in a 30-45-minute conversation, including his battle with depression, questioning the existence of God, broken relationships, and an accident that left him in a wheelchair.

A year went by and, in God's providence, Shawn saw Zane on campus sharing Christ and took the initiative to strike up a conversation. Shawn recalled some of the most recent events in his life, including the most important details of how God had saved him since their last meeting, how he was now trusting Christ, attempting to live a godly life, and how he had just been baptized. Zane was overcome with joy at this divine appointment, and at the example of how God uses the seeds of the gospel we share to bring about a harvest, even if it's not immediate. Catching a glimpse of such fruits of his labor was a great encouragement and blessing to Zane and to all who heard this powerful testimony.



**TOM & CARMEN FOX**

While attending Washington Bible College (WBC) from 1980 to 1983, Tom Fox was introduced to OAC through Dr. Will Miller's connection with Jim Duffecy and the local Baltimore, Maryland branch. Tom remembers going out with a team of students from WBC led by OAC staff member Chris Schroeder into inner-city Washington, DC. Some of Tom's fondest memories have also included ministry with another team of students led by David Wilson (former Baltimore branch director and now field director for Worldwide Proclamation) into the streets of Washington, DC, during "evangelism week."

In the collegiate semesters following, Tom participated in weekly street evangelism with a fellow student who received evangelism training from OAC.

While at Capital Bible Seminary in 2007, Tom attended the summer Sketchboard Evangelism Training led by Paul Adams and assisted by OAC staff members Gordon Loop, Mark Kennedy, and Karen (Boorse) Williams. In 2009, our board approved Tom's appointment as a Baltimore branch staff member. Two years later, he was appointed Baltimore branch director, and in 2013, Tom welcomed Chris and Amy Reick to the Baltimore team. They were part of our work until leaving in 2017.

From 2015 to 2018, Tom began shadowing our personnel development director, Bob Ewerth, learning how we conduct staff



recruitment, organize staff conferences, and utilize other key components needed to maintain a healthy mission organization. Tom also attended board of directors meetings as a guest to gain an understanding of OAC strategy and protocol. In 2019, Bob handed over the office of personnel development to Tom. He also became a vital part of the USA management team at that point in time.

It is a great blessing to have Tom and his wife, Carmen, as part of our OAC family. They often visit our staff nationwide and engage in local ministry wherever they go. Tom also teaches regularly at Indigenous Bible College in Flagstaff, Arizona, focusing on sketchboard evangelism and biblical counseling to Native Americans. He graduated in 2023 from Capital Seminary and Graduate School with a PhD in Leadership, a tremendous asset to his leadership responsibilities with us.

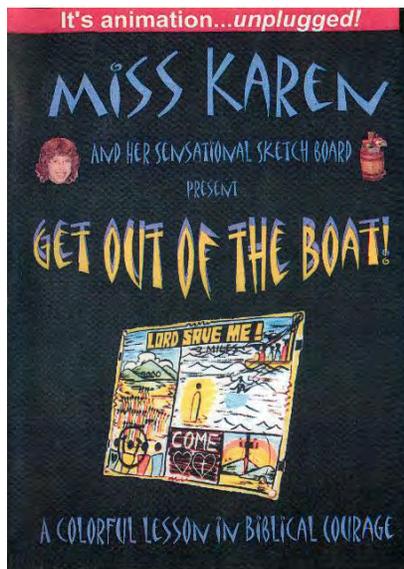
### **Frontline Story**

At the Indian Bible College in Arizona, Tom Fox was able to focus on teaching an evangelism and discipleship course and a first-semester Greek class. Four students decided they wanted to learn our OAC-type sketchboard evangelism outside the classroom, on their own time, over and above their required classes! After completing their training and practice, one student wanted to preach a message to the final evangelism class. Another student committed himself to preaching on the Navajo reservation using a sketchboard. In addition, the others look forward to using their new skills in the open air around Albuquerque, New Mexico. What a blessing it is to train such eager servants so they can fulfill God's calling in their lives.

In 2009, our leadership modified the staff status structure to improve administrative efficiency. For many years, our USA work had a staff position called “associate,” which was a part-time status arrangement. Usually, our staff are initially appointed as “interns.” The internship typically lasts about two years, but it can be extended if needed. The internship period was designed as a gradual transition into the world of OAC. It allows for a part-time working relationship with us as new staff transition out of their old jobs into OAC. During this internship period, staff are raising prayer and financial support, and as time progresses, ministry with OAC increases as their old employment obligations decrease. The internship is also a time to gain knowledge and begin to experience the nuances of open-air ministry. It allows our leadership to steadily evaluate each intern's performance against their responsibilities and duties. Also, it provides a learning environment in which the intern can consult with their branch director to plan, promote, and carry out the branch ministry. When sufficient support is raised and previous employment ties are ready to be severed, interns are appointed as full-time staff.

In contrast to this, associate staff are in a perpetual state of part-time affiliation with OAC. Their financial support is secured elsewhere, and they minister with us as they have time and are able. An associate staff relationship is essentially the same as being a volunteer worker. Because of this similarity, the decision was made to merge the associate staff status with our existing volunteer status. Some staff members who were associates with us include, but are not limited to, Greg and Bree Witter, Doris Johnson, Jim and Ruthie Gochnauer, Randy and Judy Riddle, and Larry and Marcy Stump.

In 2009, a long-time friend of Bob Ewerth, a major in the Salvation Army, made the Northeast Territory Headquarters video recording studio and staff available to us. We gratefully accepted this most generous offer and ultimately conducted several recording sessions. During these sessions, illustrations of object lessons and sketchboard messages were produced, demonstrating how such messages are presented in a typical open-air meeting. The resulting DVDs are particularly helpful to individuals seeking a way to effectively present the gospel in a visual format that attracts and holds a crowd's attention. They are equally beneficial for those who have not used these particular ministry tools and desire to know how it is done. The DVD format allows fast forwarding, pausing, rewinding, and navigating from illustration to illustration, thus providing a step-by-step guide that is a great help in the learning process. In this DVD production, we selected messages and object lessons that are particularly helpful in multiple ministry settings, including the open air, Vacation Bible Schools, youth groups, prisons, nursing homes, camps, and mission trips.



A similar recording opportunity presented itself for staff member Karen Williams when she lived in Pennsylvania. Karen worked with Brian and Rebecca Kaufman, who established a local Christian recording studio, Double-Edged Entertainment, in the Nazareth, Pennsylvania, area. This collaboration resulted in a colorful lesson DVD entitled "Miss Karen and Her Sensational Sketchboard presents Get Out Of The Boat," featuring the story of Peter walking on the water. This 50-minute DVD records Karen's sketchboard presentation of Peter walking on water. It also includes a behind-the-scenes peek at her sketch preparation, explaining creative ways to encourage children to memorize Scripture and Karen's personal testimony.

2009 was also the year we made our monthly ministry report forms and other in-house documents available online for our staff. During this time, the internet was becoming an increasingly reliable and convenient way to communicate with our staff, donors, and OAC leadership members around the country. It gradually replaced snail mail and phone calls as the vehicle of choice for information dissemination.



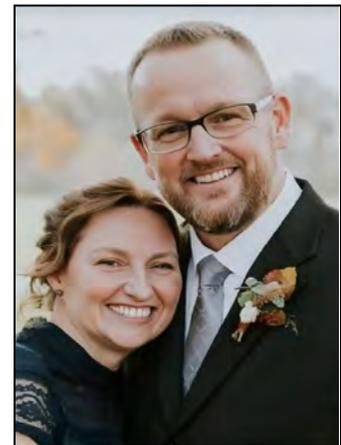
Carol King was active in her home church in Manhattan Beach, California, before coming on staff with us in 2009. She served in our Los Angeles branch in various ways, including kids' clubs, pier outreach, local mall evangelism, family retreat presentations, and inner-city work. She also had the opportunity to travel and minister in England, Israel, Cuba, Costa Rica, Scotland, and Rome. In 2016, Carol moved to the East Coast and assisted our Boston and New York City staff with outreach while taking classes at Yale University in Connecticut. After leaving OAC in 2021, Carol moved to Michigan.

#### **FUN FACT #10**

**In 2010, our acceptance of credit cards for financial donors and supplies customers expanded to include an online payment portal. Before this, folks desiring to use their credit card would need to phone our office and provide the card information verbally, making this a self-serve process.**

Brian Harmon praises God for the privilege of growing up in a home where the gospel took center stage. His father was an itinerant preacher for over 30 years; traveling was the norm. Brian's mom homeschooled him and his three siblings.

At the age of six, Brian responded to the gospel in faith. During an AWANA program, he heard that God's judgment comes because of sin. Concerned, he later asked his mother how he could be saved. His mom shared with him the simple gospel: "Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again on the third day" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). God continued what He had started in Brian's young life (Philippians 1:6). He served as a camp counselor for three summers and has been on short-term mission trips to Mexico, Russia, Malawi, Malta, Ecuador, and Bolivia. Sensing a call to ministry before he was married, he desired to share the gospel with those who might not typically attend a church. After high school, Brian worked in the trades for a couple of years before going to Pensacola Christian



***KIMBERLEE & BRIAN  
HARMON***

College for one year. At college, he met his future wife. He and Kimberlee were married in 1997 and have always been very active members in their local church. In 1999, their first child was born. God has blessed them with two daughters and five sons. As of this writing, Brian and Kimberlee have five grandchildren, with one on the way!

Brian was introduced to Open Air Campaigners through Eric Briscoe, a family friend whom Brian has known since he was eight or nine. In fact, Brian remembers sitting on the mat as a child at an open-air meeting where Eric preached! He finds it amazing that God has moved in such a way that he is now the man with the paintbrush sharing the board message!



God has called Brian to “do the work of an evangelist” (2 Timothy 4:5). Before this calling into vocational ministry, he owned his own residential building company. It is now his joy to equip the saints while reaching the lost with the gospel. In 2009, Brian participated in the OAC open-air training located in Boston. He and his wife, Kimberlee, were appointed to staff in 2010. He currently serves with OAC as the branch director for Michigan. For a number of years, Eric Briscoe mentored Brian to take over as field director, a position Eric held in OAC for many years!. Brian was appointed to this position in 2019 and is currently mentoring fellow Michigan co-worker, Scott Domont, to take over as Michigan director in the days ahead. Until Scott takes over as the director, Brian has a full schedule filling both positions!

### **Frontline Story**

Brian Harmon was ministering in the open air on the college campus of Michigan State University when he heard about the fatal shooting of Turning Point USA co-founder, Charlie Kirk. While on campus that day, Brian was talking with a college student. This young man claimed to be a materialist/atheist. After Brian spoke to him for a short time, this student moved from considering himself a materialist/atheist to just an atheist. After a few more minutes, the young man said he probably should say he is an agnostic. After talking for another 20 or 30 minutes, he was very interested in what Brian shared from Genesis 1-4. Leaving the meeting location to attend class, he said to Brian, “I wish I had someone here like you that I could talk to every day.” At that, Brian took him to a campus minister, a friend and former OAC staff member named Aaron Wentz, who regularly ministers on college campuses in Michigan!

While Satan desires to have us be quiet, silenced, run under the radar, or think no one wants to hear the gospel, there are many, like the student above, who are spiritually starving and welcome the Bread of Life.



**THE SOHMER FAMILY**

Mark and Shelby Sohmer served on our staff for 10 years. Mark grew up in a Jewish home in the Boston area and came to Christ through the testimony of a friend who was born again. At first, Mark began reading the New Testament to prove to his friend that believing in Jesus was misguided. Within a week, God convicted Mark's heart as he read the Scriptures, and he turned his life over to Christ! Mark worked in downtown Boston and often saw our OAC staff preaching in the open air. He immediately fell in love with this ministry, participated in our training, and joined the staff working with our Boston team. Mark and Shelby have four children and currently live in New Hampshire.

### **Frontline Story**

Mark Sohmer shares how, several years ago, a young boy named Derek was one of the ways the Lord used to call him full time onto the Open Air Campaigners staff. It was at a Kids Bible Club that Mark met seven-year-old Derek. After the Bible message, Mark sat with him and took Derek through a gospel booklet. Afterward, Derek indicated that he would think about following Jesus. Mark gave him the booklet as a gift. This tender-hearted boy took his fireman's hat off his head, put it on Mark's head, and insisted that it was his gift in appreciation for the booklet. Mark kept this fire hat on his office wall with Derek's name and date marked on it. Two years later, God orchestrated a meeting between Mark and Derek, once again, as a Kids' Bible Club was being held in the same neighborhood. Mark had the opportunity to lead Derek through the gospel presentation again, and this time, Derek indicated he definitely wanted to follow the narrow path to Jesus Christ! Mark has conducted a Bible Club in that same area just about every summer for many years, but never saw Derek again until one summer about five years after their second meeting. Mark was chatting with one of the neighborhood moms and was describing Derek. After hearing the details, she concluded that the boy Mark was talking about was now called "DJ" and was currently playing basketball nearby. Mark introduced himself to DJ and showed him a photo of himself and the fire hat he wore when he was seven years old. Derek got all excited and said, "Hey, that's me!" Thank God for His unwavering faithfulness and for these great times of encouragement, which show that His Word does not return void but accomplishes extraordinary things for the Kingdom.



Gregg Hunter joined our staff in 2010. Here is his testimony of how that happened. “I first heard about OAC as a college student at Liberty University. I signed up for a mission trip to Miami, not knowing anything about what I was signing up for other than it was the only mission trip I could afford! On that trip, I

first felt the Holy Spirit empowering me to proclaim the gospel to crowds of people. I returned the following year and the year after that. I then helped lead a few trips for other college students. On one of these trips, I proposed to my girlfriend (Hannah) while preaching in the open air (she said yes!).



*THE PROPOSAL*

“After coming on staff with OAC, I served in the Baltimore-Washington branch for a couple of years, teaching at Good News Clubs in local elementary schools, preaching on street corners and in Metro stations, and spending most of my summers at Ocean



City, Maryland, preaching on the boardwalk. While serving as an evangelist, I felt God calling me to the pastorate. I have been a pastor for the last eight years, but OAC will always have a special place in my heart.”

Gregg and Hannah currently live in Fort Howard, Maryland, and have four children: Mikey, Ali, Tommy, and Patti.



**SCOTT & RHONDA POPE**

Scott Pope was saved at age 38 in a revival service, and his wife, Rhonda, accepted Christ as a 12-year-old at church. Rhonda has served in her local church during Vacation Bible School, as a choir member, and as a Sunday school coordinator through the years. In addition, the Lord has used her as an administrative assistant to the Word of Life director. A mission trip to the country of Ecuador with members of his local church was used by God to impress upon Scott the importance of reaching out to the lost. His Liberty University and Louisiana Baptist University training prepared him well for a staff position with us. Scott found out about Open Air Campaigners through visits to our website. He participated in our one-week Sketchboard Evangelism Training at Washington Bible College in 2009 and came on staff in 2010. They served on our staff for one year and then reconnected in 2014, serving as a national board member for a term of service. Scott and Rhonda currently live in Georgia, where Scott operates his own business and actively serves in their local church.

#### **FUN FACT #11**

**In 2011, the official name for our open-air evangelism training sessions was agreed to be Sketchboard Evangelism Training (SET). Up until this time, a variety of names for this time of instruction included open-air seminars, training sessions, open-air outreach training, open-air training, evangelism sessions, evangelistic training academy, evangelism training seminars, etc.**

#### **Frontline Story**

Our annual Sketchboard Evangelism Training sessions have been taking place for many years. We received the following encouraging note from Deborah, one of our former participants, regarding how God is using what she and her friend, Katie, learned at the Baltimore-DC SET as they minister in Northeast Ohio.

"I just wanted to encourage you that your investment in our lives is being multiplied. OAC taught us how to "fish," and now we've had an opportunity to pass along the blessing. We conducted a sketchboard evangelism training session for five individuals who were interested in learning this gospel-sharing technique. These individuals worship at five different churches on the west side of Cleveland, but they know each other from attending the same Bible school. John Cutlip connected us with them about

four months ago. We appreciate the excellent training we received from you all ... these folks now have another tool in their evangelistic toolboxes to use ... the Spirit of God continues to s-t-r-e-t-c-h us because of what you have imparted to us. Katie is using the paintboard at her church during a kids' outreach. One of the teens who trained with us this past summer preached at a kids' club in a Hispanic community center."

Katie shared, "About twenty teens and I preached at the beach at the end of last summer. I have been asked to preach at a local Good News Club in the school in a couple of weeks. We have not been dormant!"

Both Ken and Kathy Teeter grew up in a missions environment. Ken's parents were overseas missionaries. He was born in Guyana and grew up speaking both English and Portuguese. He remembers listening to the Easter story repeatedly on the shortwave radio as a child in Brazil, and God used that to give him an understanding and a clear conviction that Christ died for him. He eventually attended and graduated from New Tribes Bible Institute with a degree in Biblical Studies, Waukesha County Technical School with certification in diesel mechanics, and New Tribes Missions' Missionary Training and Linguistics School with a degree in Intercultural Studies.



***KEN & KATHY TEETER***

When Kathy was a child, her parents owned and worked a farm, but were not yet saved. However, when she was four, all the children were invited to a Vacation Bible School where they heard the gospel. Her oldest brother was saved that week. The children persuaded their parents to attend church that Sunday, and God used the service to draw them to Himself. The missionary speaker came to their house the next week, and the rest of the children were saved. Even though she was very young, Kathy clearly understood the gospel message and surrendered her life to Christ.





***CHUCK & FRAN PHELPS***

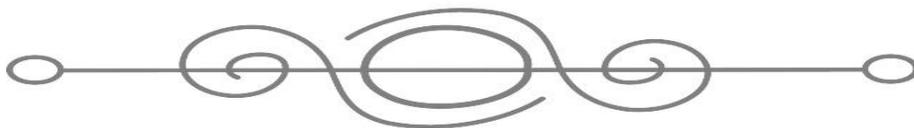
Kathy's parents were Chuck and Fran Phelps, who later sold their farm, attended Prairie Bible College in Canada, and joined OAC-USA in 1970. God provided them with 42 years of fruitful open-air ministry in the Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota area. Chuck and Fran would often spend their winter months in ministry outreach to migrant farm workers in Florida.

Through the years, Kathy has been involved in local church ministry through Sunday school, Vacation Bible School, open-air ministry, backyard Bible Clubs, singing, and bike caravan outreach. Kathy attended Toccoa Falls College, Prairie Bible College, and, eventually, New Tribes Language Institute, where she met Ken. Before joining our mission, Ken and Kathy ministered in various capacities with the New Tribes Mission in Brazil for nearly 25 years.

In 2011, Ken and Kathy transitioned from New Tribes to Open Air Campaigners and began ministry with Chuck and Fran in Minnesota. Chuck stepped down from active open-air service in 2012, and Fran was promoted to heaven in 2017. Ken and Kathy currently live in Anoka, Minnesota, and continue to minister in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, caring for Chuck, who, at the time of this writing, is 98 years old!



***CHUCK PHELPS AT THE BOARD***





**DAWN & JUAN MONZON**

Juan Monzon grew up in an evangelical Christian home in Paraguay. He grew up believing he was a Christian, but at the age of 18, he realized that he was utterly lost and needed to ask Christ to forgive him of his sins and come into his life. Shortly after, he was baptized. In 1987, Juan enrolled at Word of Life Bible Institute, where he studied music and evangelism for two years. During that time, God turned his heart towards missions in an open-air evangelism class where David Wilson was his teacher. Then, in 1991, David Wilson came to

Paraguay to help Juan establish a branch of Open Air Campaigners in that country (see chapter 28). Juan has been involved in several types of outreach since then.

Dawn accepted the Lord as her Lord and Savior in third grade through the ministry of Child Evangelism missionaries in Korea and was baptized in her early high school years. She went to Paraguay in 1990 to teach at a Christian missionary school and met Juan just two days after arriving. They were married in November 1992 and have been blessed with four beautiful children: Wesley, Ashley, Jessica, and Alicia.

After serving for 22 years in Paraguay, Juan and Dawn felt the Lord was bringing them to the United States. They began praying and waiting for the Lord's timing. At the end of 2012, the doors to move were opened, and they settled in Tyler, Texas, to join our Dallas branch, working alongside Rick and Dovie Moore.

God has given Juan a musical gift; he plays the guitar and sings. Several years ago, Juan studied opera with a Russian as his goal was to move to Europe and sing. Juan and Felipe Diaz started a musical group called Grupo Gilgal in 1989. A Baptist missionary came up with the name. The group has produced several CDs and even a couple of DVDs.



### **FUN FACT #12**

**Like Juan and Felipe, several of our staff members through the years have been skilled musicians. Many would use their music to attract and hold a crowd when conducting open-air meetings. Some of the staff who were musically gifted include, but are not limited to, Wes and Belva Dunn (guitar), Bron Carlisle (accordion), Orlando Lafica (trumpet), Tom Knox (cornet), Aaron Wentz (drums), and Ryan Itzel (acoustic guitar).**



Frank Baldus was born in New Jersey but raised in Southern California. At 27, Frank answered God's call on his life at Calvary Chapel in Downey, California, while serving in the Air Force.

Early in his walk with the Lord, Frank read Richard Wurmbrand's book, "Tortured for Christ," which stirred his heart for the lost and the persecuted church. He was introduced to Open Air Campaigners while on a short-term mission trip to France (see chapter 15).

After returning from that trip, Frank organized teams from his college and career group to assist the Los Angeles OAC branch until the Air Force moved him to Washington, DC. While there, he volunteered with a couple of East Coast OAC branches. After his military service, he attended and graduated from Calvary Chapel Bible College.

Frank participated in our Sketchboard Evangelism Training in Baltimore, Maryland, and joined the OAC staff in 2011. He was appointed as director of the Southern California branch in 2016. Through the years, God has opened doors for him to also minister in Ireland, South Africa, Malta, Mexico, France, and Ecuador.



## Frontline Story

We see God at work in the open air, orchestrating divine appointments that we are convinced are much more than mere coincidences. Frank Baldus met a Christian couple at the Santa Monica Pier who told him that, in response to seeing various entertainers perform on the pier, they had a deep desire to see Christians sharing the gospel there. To their delight, they came upon Frank and his team sharing Christ! At another time, one of Frank's regular volunteers, who teaches at local junior colleges, was preparing to share from the sketchboard. One of her students showed up in the audience with her girlfriend. After the presentation, Frank's teacher-volunteer spoke to

both young ladies, and the student's friend made a profession of faith in Christ. Then there was the time God allowed Frank to lead a nine-year-old girl to Christ, who was brought to the meeting by her grandmother. The grandmother told Frank she came to Christ at an OAC presentation in East Los Angeles when she was also a little girl.



**BILL ITZEL**

Bill Itzel has been a friend and worker with OAC for many years and currently serves on our national board of directors. Here is his testimony about how God worked to bring this about.

"OAC has been a big part of my life since I was just a child attending Arlington Baptist School, where I first heard Dave Wilson speak in our chapel services. Seeds were planted in my heart that the Holy Spirit used to bring me to salvation later on. As a teenager, I sang and

ministered with Fred Kornis on the streets of Baltimore, at the Helping Up Mission, and Baltimore Rescue Mission, and even through the loudspeakers in his van downtown as we drove. In my 20s and 30s, I frequently went to college campuses with my good friend Paul Adams and shared the gospel with many young people there. Even my children worked with Paul on mission trips. That is where my son, Ryan, was trained by people like Paul and also Zane Dempsie and drawn by God into a street-preaching ministry. By his mid-teens, he was already on staff, and it was such a blessing to see my son in full-time ministry for the Lord. Ryan left to complete his Bible education, and in 2020, the world came to a halt. Ryan and I were working as security guards to make ends meet, but Ryan was being drawn back to OAC. In 2021, my wife, Karen, spent 17 days on a ventilator with COVID-19, and it changed my outlook on everything. I realized my days were numbered, and even though I was in full-time music ministry, I had several days each week I could be reaching people and laying up treasures in heaven. In June of 2021, when Karen was well enough, Ryan and I went back out on the streets full time, and we continued to work together; he worked with OAC, and me with my ministry...God has blessed our efforts to be in seven cities each week, bringing the gospel to the Baltimore-Washington area (and even into Gettysburg). I also had the privilege to lead worship at the [OAC] worldwide conference in Ecuador in 2024 and pray for even more opportunities to fulfill the great commission working with OAC, one conversation at a time."

As mentioned in his testimony above, Bill's son, Ryan, grew up to love and serve the Lord. Music ministry opportunities gave him experience singing in churches and sharing the gospel with people from a very early age. He was saved as a child, and when introduced to Open Air Campaigners at a young age through Paul Adams, this open-air ministry became a natural part of his activities. During his high school years, Ryan participated in several outreach and mission trips through his local church, Forcey Bible, in Silver Spring, Maryland. He participated in our Sketchboard Evangelism Training at Washington Bible College while a senior in high school and joined our staff in 2011 at the age of 16! Then, in 2013, Ryan left OAC to attend college but returned to work with us in 2020. He is married to Tasia, and they have two daughters, Sofia and Natalia.



*THE RYAN ITZEL FAMILY*



Ryan preaches regularly with our OAC staff on the college campus and other venues in the Baltimore-Washington branch, while continuing to sing, play, and preach with the ministry

his family has been conducting for many years. In 2025, he was appointed director of our Baltimore branch.

**FUN FACT #13**

**Ryan Itzel, at age 16, was the youngest person in USA history to be appointed to a full-time staff position.**



*RYAN'S FIRST MEETING AS AN OAC STAFF MAN - 2011*

One of the most, if not *the* most, unchurched areas in the United States, at the time of this writing, is the Bay Area of Northern California, which includes cities surrounding the San Francisco Bay. This area encompasses the major cities of San Francisco, San Jose, and Oakland, as well as numerous smaller towns. Many people have heard of San Francisco and Oakland, but are less familiar with San Jose, although it is the largest of the three. San Jose and its suburbs are more commonly known as Silicon Valley, a well-known hub of technology and innovation where many world-changing



**BECKY & DAN BEAUDOIN**

inventions have been born. For instance, the first Apple desktop computers were built by hand there, and the world headquarters of Apple as well as many other world tech companies, are still in and around San Jose.

Dan Beaudoin was raised in the Bay Area. After coming to Christ in his teens, he felt a strong call to ministry early on, but was unsure exactly what he was being called to do! He had a love for theology and biblical apologetics, but that didn't easily translate into a ministry job. He applied for jobs at several ministries and churches, but God closed every door to him.

Then, in early 2008, Dan saw an ad online for The Ambassador's Academy, a public evangelism training camp run by Living Waters, the ministry founded by evangelist Ray Comfort. Feeling a clear calling from God to attend, Dan spoke with his wife, Becky, about the class, and they agreed he should go. The event was life-changing for Dan and set him on a course that would become the passion of his life, public evangelism.

After spending several years ministering on the streets regularly, starting in 2008, Dan heard about Open Air Campaigners in 2011, thanks again to the Ambassador's Academy. OAC missionary Paul Adams had attended a couple of the academies to demonstrate the use of the sketchboard. Although Dan did not attend those particular sessions, he did hear about the sketchboard and was intrigued by the unique outreach tool. He contacted Paul and asked him to come to the Bay Area to train some of the local evangelists, which was done later that same year. By 2013, Dan was using the sketchboard as his primary outreach tool. In 2015, God moved him out of his full-time secular job, and Dan applied for and was accepted as a missionary with us, tasked with planting a new branch; thus, the NORCAL (Northern California) branch began in 2015.

Brenten Powers joined the NORCAL branch in 2020. He and his wife, Lena, already had extensive ministry experience and training, having spent many years with their family in Eastern Europe as missionaries, where they shared Christ and assisted with church planting in Hungary, Latvia, and Ukraine. In fact, the first time Brenten had seen the sketchboard in use was during his time overseas.



**BRENTEN & LENA POWERS**

Dan and Brenten met at a Christmas event on a local military base. A common friend had invited Dan to preach the gospel and Brenten to run the soundboard, as he had an audio engineering background. Shortly after that meeting in 2019, Brenten had the opportunity to discuss the gospel on a local radio station. He had called in to an

afternoon radio show to respond to claims from an atheist, and the host liked his responses enough to invite him to be a guest as well. However, Brenten wanted a co-worker to help him with this new opportunity and thought of Dan, given his apologetics background. The two met, and as they talked, it became clear that their



**DAN (left) & BRENTEN (right)**

beliefs and approaches were compatible. They began making regular appearances on the Flight 1080 radio show together, sharing gospel truth and answering questions from callers. This led to an ongoing pre-recorded show on the same station, a comprehensive radio study of the Gospel of John, and, at the time of this writing, both are still visiting the show regularly.

Additionally, as a result of the radio show, Brenten and Dan began working together in street ministry, often inviting people who had listened to the show to meet them afterwards. Brenten was a good fit for public ministry, having gained experience in Europe. His art background made him a natural for using the sketchboard. It wasn't long before Dan officially invited him to join the branch!

With Brenten's addition to the team, the branch's reach expanded. As of 2025, they conduct regular outreach programs in the Monterey Bay Area, including Monterey, Capitola, and Santa Cruz on the coast, as well as in and around San Jose and the South Bay, with locations such as Palo Alto, Redwood City, San Mateo, and universities like Stanford and San Jose State. They also partner with churches and ministries farther north, in Oakland, Berkeley, Sacramento, and Yuba City.



**DAN IN THE OPEN AIR**



**CONNIE AND STEVE JOHNSON**

Steve Johnson came to Christ in his early thirties. At that time in his life, he was successful in business but spiritually empty. God used an individual along the way who challenged him to read the Gospel of John. It was a year later that Steve surrendered his life to Christ.

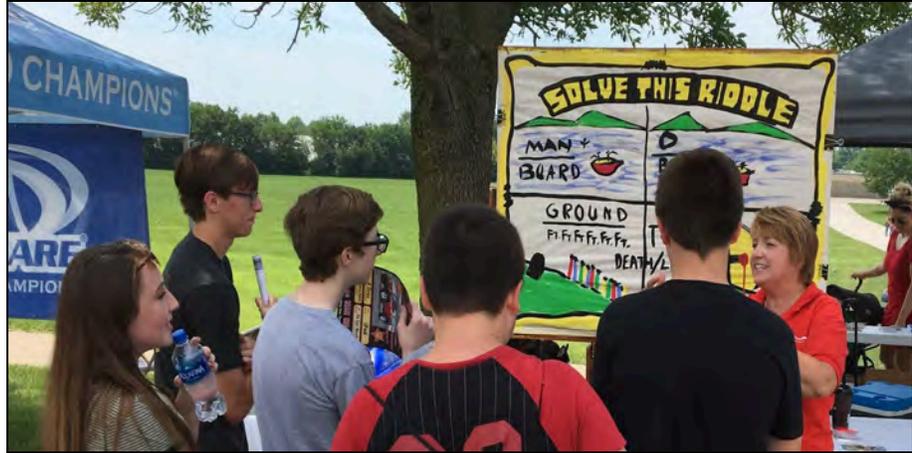
Connie became a Christian at the age of 26 through Billy Graham's TV ministry. The Lord has used her through the years as a godly mother to three children (Kyle, Anika, and Ryan), as well as a vital part of ministry activities, ministering alongside Steve in various outreach venues. Steve received his

Master's in Biblical Studies from Front Range Bible Institute in Colorado Springs. Over the years, he has taught numerous evangelism classes in churches and led groups into the streets to witness. They have been active volunteers with Compassion International and a local Crisis Pregnancy Center, and have taken the lead in marriage mentoring sessions. They have also established an evangelism ministry called I Am Not Ashamed (IANA). Their love for evangelism was renewed when Steve participated in open-air training through the Living Waters Ambassador Academy in Los Angeles in 2008. Steve and Connie participated in our



**STEVE IN THE OPEN AIR**

Baltimore-DC Sketchboard Evangelism Training session in 2012. Upon successful completion of our Orientation/ Candidate School in 2015, they were appointed to staff in June of that year. They currently minister in Iowa.



*CONNIE AT THE BOARD*



Erin Chervenak was part of our OAC Sketchboard Evangelism Training in the Boston area during 2009 and came on staff in 2015, serving in New York State. She trusted Christ shortly after her high school graduation and, in college, joined Christian Action Fellowship (now known as Chi Alpha), where she participated in an evangelism class at Christ Fellowship Church in Asheville, North Carolina. From 1990 to 2009, she participated in various evangelism teams at colleges and on the streets in places where the Lord led her, beginning in North Carolina and then moving on to Pennsylvania, Louisiana, Thailand, and New York. She is active in her local church by presenting sketchboard messages in Children’s Church, VBS, and AWANA. She also participates in evangelistic outreach throughout Rochester and its surrounding areas, utilizing the sketchboard for street evangelism, campus



ministry, and Bible Clubs for children in both indoor and outdoor settings. During the summer months, Erin helps out with ongoing evangelism at the OAC Boston branch and partners with the Ministry to Muslims Network. Occasionally, the door to work internationally has opened, allowing her to share the gospel using the sketchboard in Uganda, the Republic of Congo, and Ecuador.

## Frontline Story

God has opened many doors for Erin Chervenak to minister in various public schools. On one occasion, she joined a small team working in Rochester's Public School #17, located in a rough inner-city area where the children were often wild and inattentive. Sometimes, Erin wondered if anything eternal was happening at this location, but she didn't



give up, even when temporarily called away to minister elsewhere. Over time, she was able to return and offer an extra pair of hands to teach the wild group. The team was glad to have her help, and so she went back one day with a sketchboard painting describing the story of Zacchaeus. The group was as unruly as ever; however, they suddenly became quiet during the gospel presentation, their eyes fixed on the message! Afterward, carrying her equipment outside, she ran into one of the Bible club kids who attended several years earlier, along with his brother and a couple of his friends. He remembered Erin; they had a good chat, and everyone took the tracts Erin offered to them. It became evident that the Lord was drawing children to Himself in this challenging place. Erin was greatly encouraged, and she persevered. God is blessing her obedience as she continues to walk through these open doors of opportunity.

## FUN FACT #14

**In 2014, our online presence reached a level at which we decided it was time to begin a search for someone to function as our official OAC-USA webmaster. Until then, we could handle website postings, updates, and other administrative tasks in-house. Board member Matt Harvey contributed significantly to designing and establishing our web presence in the beginning. Some years after our site went live, God prompted Jeff and Laura Clausen, friends of Tom Fox, to undertake a significant revision of our site. They continue to do an excellent job of regularly maintaining and updating our web presence.**



**REBECCA & JIMMY COATES**

Rebecca Coates trusted Christ as a child and was blessed to grow up in a godly Christian home and church in suburban Maryland. She dedicated her heart to evangelism in 2003, following her conviction as a teenager that she had not been sharing the gospel with the lost. In 2012, God opened the door for her to attend our Sketchboard Evangelism Training in the Baltimore-Washington

branch. She began volunteering for the branch following the training, joined Open Air Campaigners in 2015, and continued working for the Baltimore- Washington branch for the next five years. She transitioned to the Central Pennsylvania branch under Zane Dempsie in 2020 and, in 2021, married her long-time friend, James “Jimmy” Coates, who had attended her church when she lived in Maryland. Until leaving OAC at the end of 2025 to start a family, Rebecca ministered regularly on college campuses, in downtown Johnstown, Pennsylvania, and in front of the Blair County courthouse, engaging people with the good news.



**CHRISTINE & MIKE WILSON**

Mike Wilson became a Christian while attending Michigan Tech. He graduated with a degree in civil engineering and spent six years in Texas, working as both an engineer and a math teacher. He met Christine after returning to Michigan, and they were married in 1999. They live in central Michigan and have four adult daughters, Katie, Emily, Abigail, and Megany.

Mike has been involved in open-air evangelism ministry at Central Michigan University since 1998. He learned about Open Air Campaigners in 2012 when Brian Harmon spoke at Central Michigan Christian Church. The Wilsons joined our staff in November 2016.



Chris McKinley was delivered out of New Ageism and witchcraft and was saved on Thanksgiving Day in November of 1996. He and his wife, Bonnie, were married in



**BONNIE & CHRIS  
MCKINLEY**

May 2001, and now have two daughters, Chloe and Bella. God gave Chris a passion for and the gift of evangelism from the day he met Jesus. On moving to New Hampshire in 2013, Chris met OAC staff member Mark Sohmer and began volunteering with the ministry. In 2016, Chris attended our Orientation/Candidate School. He was invited to join the OAC staff and is currently a staff member in the greater New Hampshire region. In this New England setting, Chris leads teams into the open air to share the gospel primarily on college campuses and at Hampton Beach, where many fruitful one-on-one conversations occur.

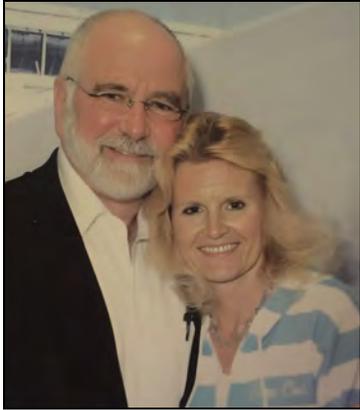
One day at Keene State, a skateboarder stole one of the Ten Commandment tablets from the display Chris had set up and cruised off across the campus. Chris's co-worker, Eric, yelled, "Hey! He stole one of the tablets!" When Chris saw the guy speeding away on his skateboard, he ran after him! It must have been the Lord giving Chris strength because he ran so fast that he actually caught up with the skateboard bandit. When the thief got to his dorm and turned around, he was shocked to see Chris standing there and replied,

"Wow! If you ran fast enough to catch up to me, then you deserve this back," and handed Chris the tablet. Winded, Chris said, "I just want you to know," ...deep breath... "that Jesus loves you, man." The thief scoffed, "No, he doesn't, I'm queer!" Chris replied, "Hey, man," ...gasp... "I was a witch," ...deep breath... The thief, mouth agape, replied, "You were a witch?"



"Yup," ...gasp... "and Jesus loved me enough to die for me, His enemy," ...deep breath. "He loves you just as much," ...breath... "and died for you too," ...gasp... "God bless."

That's all the words Chris could get out! That particular day of gospel-seed sowing was one that the random skateboarder thief will certainly never forget, and neither will Chris!



**ED & DEBBIE NEIMANN**

Ed Neimann received God's call to preach and had a pastoral and pulpit ministry for 25 years before his introduction to OAC. After completing his Doctor of Ministry Degree, he began to look for another church to pastor when he discovered our website. The more information he received, the more he became impressed by this ministry. God began to speak to Ed's heart with this thought, "All your preaching has been indoors in the pulpit; why don't you now shift your ministry focus to the open air?" He responded to that call, participated in the OAC training, attended our Orientation/Candidate School, and in November 2016, Ed

and his wife, Debbie, joined us. His initial ministry was conducted alongside Zane Dempsie in Central Pennsylvania for a couple of years. His sphere of ministry expanded to a new field in 2019 when he was appointed to begin a full-time branch location in the Pittsburgh region. Ed and Debbie are now conducting full-time ministry in that part of the state, which we refer to as our Western Pennsylvania Branch.



**ED MINISTERING ON THE BOARDWALK**

## **Frontline Story**

The cold winter months can be challenging at times for conducting public open-air evangelism. However, God is always at work, and it never ceases to amaze Ed and Debbie Neimann how, even in adverse weather conditions, God remains in control and draws people to their meeting locations to hear the gospel. Ed had a great time sharing Christ with a man one day in 10-degree weather on the campus of Penn State University. At another time, over at Slippery Rock University, Ed was trying to prepare a message on the sketchboard. Students began gathering around before he could complete his pre-sketch, asking many questions about spiritual matters. Ed sensed that God was doing something special that day, and so, without using the board to present the gospel, he spent all his time talking with the students about what he was trying to paint! They all listened intently, and one of the students videoed the entire gospel presentation. One student, Dan, stayed after everyone else left until Ed had answered all his questions. The time ended with Dan wanting the salvation that Christ offers, which Ed had been talking about. God is in control, and we thank the Lord for staff members like Ed, who are sensitive to His leading even when it's not comfortable or convenient!

## **FUN FACT #15**

**Over the years, we have handled all our payroll and related filings for individual support, state taxes, and required federal documentation in-house. Then, in 2016, with staff numbers increasing and geographic locations expanding, it became necessary to outsource our payroll processing to a professional payroll service, which was a significant burden lifted from our Central Services office. It also ensured that our growing organization would continue to handle all legally required paperwork efficiently and minimize the risk of penalties and fines from local, state, and federal government agencies.**



***MATT & ELIZABETH SMART***

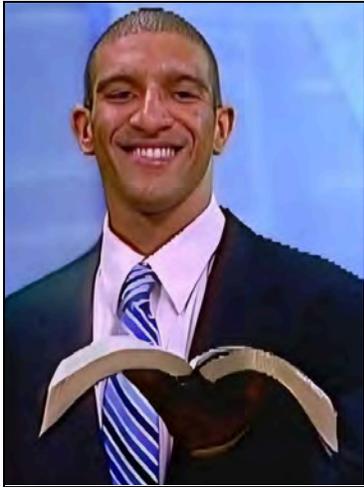
Matt Smart grew up in a Christian home in southern Arkansas and trusted Christ at the age of 17. He met Elizabeth as a student at Ouachita Baptist University, where they both earned their Bachelor's Degrees in Biblical Studies. They were married in 2002 and now have two children. In 2004, they moved to Louisville, Kentucky, where Matt earned his Master's Degree in Evangelism. During his days of study in Kentucky, Matt learned of OAC through our website. In 2009, Matt and Elizabeth moved to Central Pennsylvania, where he served as a pastor. They became interested in mobilizing his local church to reach the lost around them in the open air. He received Sketchboard Evangelism Training and much encouragement from

staff member Zane Dempsie, and eventually came on staff with us from 2016 to 2018, serving in Pennsylvania.

Jeff Karlich trusted Christ as a child and rededicated himself to the Lord at age 36. He and his wife, Kelli, have two children and live in Ohio. They found out about us at a Life Action Ministries conference in Michigan, where Tom Harmon, staff man Brian Harmon's father, was the speaker. Both Jeff and Kelli took part in the Boston Sketchboard Evangelism Training in 2016. After participating in our Orientation/Candidate School, we were pleased to have them on staff working in the Ohio area from 2017 to 2019.



***JEFF & KELLI KARLICH FAMILY***



Jay Ricci received Christ as a child and almost immediately desired to share the Word with others. He became interested in street evangelism and learned about OAC by receiving gospel tracts handed out by our staff in the Boston area. Jay researched our mission, participated in the Boston Sketchboard Evangelism Training in 2016, joined our staff in 2018, and served in our Boston area until 2020, when he felt the Lord moving him on.

God provided many opportunities for Jay to minister in our Boston branch. First, he was able to be a part of a Department of Youth Services (DYS) Bible study at a juvenile detention center in Roslindale, Massachusetts. He ministered there with another brother from his home church, who initially coordinated with the prison to set up the meetings. Another opportunity was the establishment of a discipleship Bible study in the home of an older saint to help her disciple her troubled 14-year-old granddaughter. Jay had the privilege of illustrating gospel truth with his sketchboard at his church's annual talent show, where unbelievers were encouraged to trust Christ and believers were encouraged to continue to live wholeheartedly for Him. Jay has traveled to New York City to conduct evangelism in Times Square and the surrounding areas and is being used by the Lord to preach the Word in local church settings. He also had the privilege of helping train a local church in Taunton, Massachusetts, alongside OAC co-worker Eric Briscoe. They instructed the people on how to use various evangelism tools, held an open-air meeting in a busy park, and saw God do what He does best: save souls and encourage His saints to work together for the cause of the gospel.





***JOHN & BECKY RISNER***

John Risner grew up in a small town in Northwest Ohio and attended Bowling Green State University, where he received a Bachelor's Degree in Business with a specialization in marketing. He is married to Becky, and they have two daughters, Jordan and Marley. John learned about OAC through staff member Paul Adams. He received the required training and came on staff from February 2018 until December 2020. He ministered in the greater Nashville area, which is a phenomenal place to meet visitors from all around the world and share Christ with them. John says that the reason

Nashville is such a popular destination is simple: folks love to come and walk around this fantastic city, as there is so much to enjoy. Nashville has become an incredible place to visit, as people worldwide come to see their idea of "The States." It's not uncommon for John to end up conversing with visitors from many different countries and other states here in America. He made sure these conversations quickly turned to spiritual truth from the Bible, loved to have individuals and teams join him for outreach, and organized what he called "T4E" (Training For Evangelism) on Saturday nights. His goal was to REACH, CONNECT, and TRAIN.

#### **FUN FACT #16**

**In 2019, we purchased a wide-format printer to produce hard-copy pre-sketches of board messages. These pre-sketches were made available to individuals at a reasonable cost through our online open-air supplies store for several years. Eventually, the print machine went out of service, but the pre-sketch files remain available for free download on our website. The files can be taken to a local printer to produce hard copies for use on the sketchboard.**





**SCOTT & CHRISTINE DOMONT FAMILY**

Both Scott and Christine Domont trusted Christ at an early age. They were married in 2002, determined to serve the Lord wherever He led. They participated in small-group Bible studies, Sunday schools, teaching, preaching, open-air evangelism, short-term overseas missions, youth leadership, discipleship studies, martial arts ministries, kids' clubs, and other outreach opportunities as they became available. All this ministry was done as Scott could

schedule, but his full-time job consumed a significant amount of time. God began to impress upon Scott and Christine the need to dedicate themselves to Him as a priority. Logically and financially, transitioning from a secure, well-paying job to raising support as a missionary was not a reasonable choice. God's ways often do not make human sense. As far as the heavens are above the earth, so are His ways above ours (Isaiah 55:9). He has given each believer differing gifts and abilities to fulfill His commission on earth to go into all the world and proclaim the gospel. Some go out, some stay home, and some support through prayer or giving. God was calling Scott and Christine to go out!

schedule, but his full-time job consumed

The Domonts eventually became convinced of God's specific calling to serve on staff with us, so they participated in our Sketchboard Evangelism Training and Orientation / Candidate School. They were officially appointed to our OAC staff in 2020, where they began a ministry that continues to this day in our Michigan branch. As of this writing, Scott is in the process of being trained to become our new Michigan director. When he becomes active in this role, our current Michigan director, Brian Harmon, will have the needed time to dedicate himself fully to his role as our national field director.



**CHRISTINE SHARING CHRIST**



**SCOTT IN THE OPEN AIR**

## STAFF CONFERENCES

Through the years, as funds become available and ministry schedules allow, all our USA staff come together for a week-long staff conference. These are extraordinary times of fellowship, reporting on what God is doing in our local areas, prayer, and planning. Our goal is to hold our staff conferences at different locations each time, typically hosted by an established OAC branch. In this way, our staff can encourage the hosting branch and also experience their ministry firsthand. These conferences are open to all OAC staff, our mission board members, and ministry friends. Every four years, we aim to host these gatherings as an OAC Zone conference, during which staff from our Americas Zone (Canada, the USA, and Jamaica) can gather. Since 1983, conference locations have included the following:

1983 Pennsylvania - - - Philadelphia	1999 Canada - - - - - Ontario
1984 Maryland - - - - - Baltimore	2000 California - - - - - Los Angeles
1985 New Jersey - - - - Woodside Bible Chapel	2001 Canada - - - - - Quebec
1987 New Jersey - - - - Hydewood Park Baptist Church	2004 Pennsylvania - - Lancaster Bible College
1988 Pennsylvania - - - Philadelphia	2005 Massachusetts - Boston
1989 New York - - - - - AMOC Conference Center	2006 Canada - - - - - Ontario
1990 Massachusetts - Boston	2007 Pennsylvania - - Mt. Gilead
1991 New Jersey - - - - Libenzell Mission	2008 Pennsylvania - - Mt. Gilead
1992 New Jersey - - - - Libenzell Mission	2009 Pennsylvania - - Mt. Gilead
1993 Florida - - - - - Stuart	2010 Maryland - - - - - Baltimore
1994 Canada - - - - - Ontario	2012 Pennsylvania - - Philadelphia
1995 Pennsylvania - - Philadelphia	2014 Idaho - - - - - Camp ALACCA
1996 Jamaica - - - - - Kingston	2016 Maryland - - - - - Camp Wabanna
1997 Massachusetts - Boston	2018 Pennsylvania - - Canoe Creek State Park
1998 Maryland - - - - - Washington Bible College	2021 Indiana - - - - - Higher Ground Conference and Retreat Center
	2023 Maryland - - - - - Baltimore Maritime Center
	2025 California - - - - - Mt. Hermon Camp

The following group photos are a sampling of our staff conference gatherings through the years. They include some, but not all, of our conferences up through 2025.



***Staff Conference 1982 - Illinois  
Pacific Garden Mission - Chicago***



***Staff Conference 1984 - Maryland  
Halethorp Community Church - Baltimore***



***Staff Conference 1989 - New York  
AMOC Conference Center - Niagara Falls***



***Staff Conference 1994 - Canada  
Ontario***



***Staff Conference 2014 - Idaho  
ALACCA Bible Camp***



***Staff Conference 2016 - Maryland  
Camp WABANNA***



***Staff Conference 2018 - Pennsylvania  
Canoe Creek State Park - Hollidaysburg***



***Staff Conference 2021 - Indiana  
Higher Ground Conference Center***



***Staff Conference 2023 - Maryland  
Maritime Center - Baltimore/DC area***



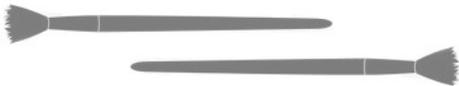
***Staff Conference 2025 - California  
Mt Hermon Conference Center - Santa Cruz***

# OAC USA THROUGH THE YEARS

---



*Ben Gazroic operated a metal fabricating business in Elizabeth, New Jersey. For many years, he designed, constructed, and installed canopies and platforms on our open-air vans.*



*George Naggy ministered in New York City for nearly 40 years.*



*George and Betty, circa 1981, lived on Long Island.*



*Chuck Phelps and his wife, Fran, were active in the open air for over 42 years. Here is Chuck conducting a children's program circa 1972.*



*Russ Hodder was introduced to OAC as a Bible college student in 1970.*



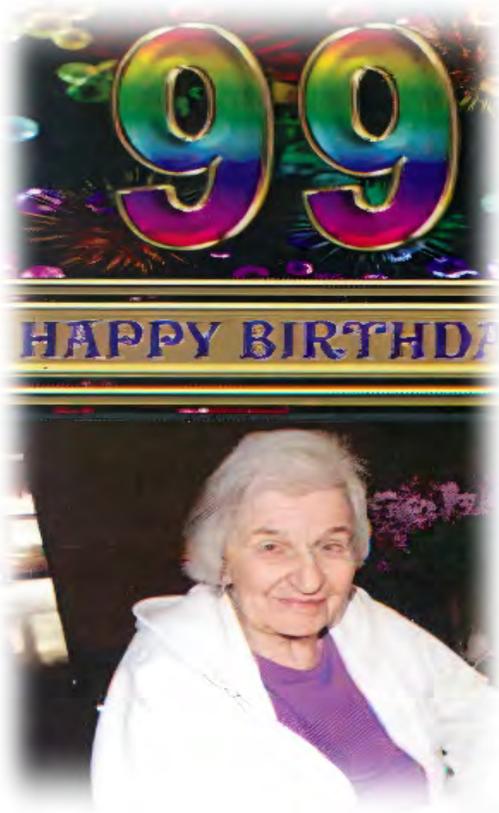
*Russ (left) during his first years of ministry in the Los Angeles branch.*



*Here is a trip back in time with a young David Braun who found out about OAC as a student at Word of Life Bible Institute in 1980.*



*While at Word of Life Bible Institute, David Braun met Joy, who became his wife. They joined OAC in 1985, and currently minister in the metropolitan area of Philadelphia.*



*Olga Kruck (left) was our first USA office worker in 1959. She was promoted to heaven just one month before turning 100 years old! She and Ralph Coglianesse took care of all of our bookkeeping and accounting needs in the Wheaton, Illinois, office.*

*Ralph Coglianesse was a diligent worker for many years before retiring in 1995. He and his wife, Emily (right), continue to live in Chicago.*





*John Cutlip circa 1980 in our New York-New Jersey office. He later became director of our Central Services office, which relocated to Pennsylvania in 1989.*



*Sue Cutlip worked with her husband, John, in the office until their children were born. She ministered as secretary to our USA director, Art Williams. Here we see her very pleased with the brand-new word processor circa 1983.*





*Staff meeting in our Plainfield, New Jersey, office circa 1982. From left to right, Jack Kreidler, John Cutlip, Jim Duffecy, and Eric Briscoe, who was visiting from Boston.*



*Steve Nelson and family, circa 1984. Steve was planting a church in Queens, New York, when he found out about OAC through David Wilson. He has been a friend of the ministry for many years (See chapter 47 for more details).*





*Jim and Koline Sherwood (above) started with us in our New York-New Jersey branch in the '80s. Later, they moved to Florida, reaching out to international college students.*



*Al Turhune (above) and his wife, Linda, also ministered with our New York-New Jersey branch.*



*Lisa Gruthusen (left) came on staff as a single lady in Chicago. She worked closely with Ed and Cathy Lowe and eventually married Philip Lundstrom.*

*Mary Rosier (right) received her bachelor's degree from Biola University in California and joined our Los Angeles branch team in the early 1980s.*





*A young, unmarried lady named Tammy Bellinger (left) ministered in our Philadelphia branch in the early 1980s. During a course of OAC training at Tennessee Temple University in Chattanooga in 1982 (see picture below), Tammy met a young man named Chip Welton. Chip was assigned to a team that traveled to Philadelphia. He and Tammy got to know each other during this time and eventually married!*



*South Carolina staff member Randy Riddle (pictured above, kneeling and also leading the meeting at right) assisted teams serving at Columbia Bible College (above photo), where Chip Welton (above, far right) provided student leadership. During his college years, Chip completed two summers of service with OAC Philadelphia, working alongside the Director Bob Ewerth, Eric Briscoe, Dennis King, and, of special note, Tammy Bellinger!*





*God has led some faithful volunteers our way through the years who have helped us teach and lead teams in the open air. Mark Johnson (left) is one of those choice servants. He has frequently traveled with our staff to various outreach events and is a great co-laborer. We appreciate his heart for ministry and deep desire to share Christ with the lost.*



*Minneapolis-St. Paul staff member Mike Malszycki (above) circa 1985 leading a children's meeting from the van platform.*



*Planning meeting circa 1980. Standing in the back row from left to right, Chris Schroeder, Jack Kreidler, and Chuck Williams. In the front row are Randy Riddle (left) and Jim Duffecy (right).*



*Matt Harvey has been a friend of OAC for many decades! As a teenager, he received training and spent a summer ministering in our Philadelphia branch. Through the years, he has been a great help and blessing to our mission in many ways. He currently serves as a national board member.*



*Here is Joe Toy circa 1985. Joe has served through the years as a Philadelphia staff member and also as a board member. Today, he is based in the Raleigh, North Carolina area, still conducting open-air evangelism and leads an organization called Open Air Ministries.*



*Mike Bussen and his son, John, conducting outreach in a local park, circa 2007.*



*Our Central Services office moved from New Jersey to Nazareth, Pennsylvania, in 1989. Through the years, God has used OAC-USA to provide open-air equipment and supplies to our staff and also to other missionaries and multiple local churches around the world. We currently have over 80 types of items available to conduct effective open-air evangelism.*



*Preparing for an open-air meeting (above) in New York City in 1981 are, from left to right, staff members Art Williams, Chris Schroeder, Randy Riddle, and a friend of the ministry, Scotty Teague.*



*Janet Fureman conducting a children's meeting in Plainfield, New Jersey, circa 1985.*

*Sam Frey (below) ministering in the New York-New Jersey branch in the 1980s.*



*Sherry Frey (Sam's wife) also served in our New York-New Jersey branch, working with the support staff team there.*





*A young Eric and Diane Briscoe family.*



*Eric Briscoe at the sketchboard in 1993 with his daughter, Bethany, singing. She sang for Eric twice that day as they were doing an outreach with Washington Bible College at 10th and Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, DC.*



*Jim Kirkpatrick served with our Los Angeles branch team in the 1990s.*



*Paul Adams at the sketchboard, circa 1992.*



*Gordon Loop, circa 1992, in the open air.*



*Al Collins (left) and George Naggy (right)  
at a staff conference in 1994.*



*At a staff conference gathering are  
Bob Ewerth (left), Chuck Phelps,  
and JoAnne LaRue.*



*Peter O'Driscoll was involved in a vibrant local church outreach to children of all ages in the greater Orlando, Florida, area called Orlando Children's Church. Here are some glimpses of this ministry, circa 1996. A fleet of school buses transported many children to and from these meetings each week.*

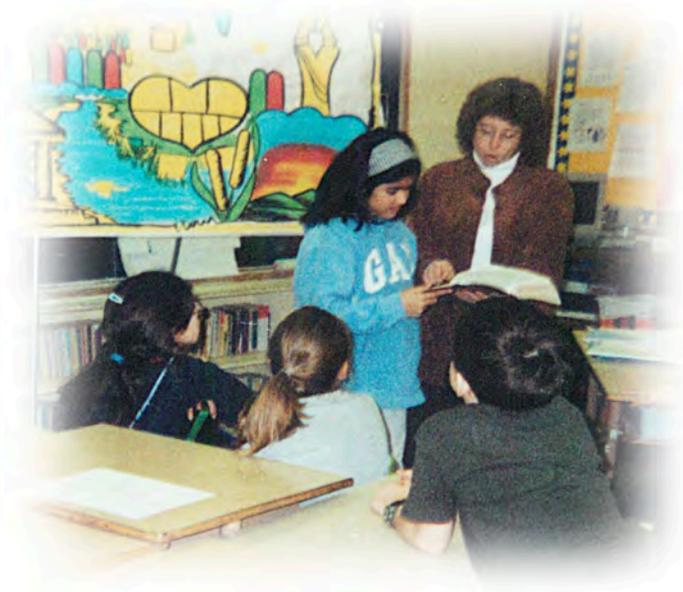




*A young John and Cathy Plasterer family, circa 1996. They ministered in our Baltimore branch from 1993 to 1998.*



*Karen Boorse was married to Chris Williams in 2012. For many years before that, she was known as "Miss Karen" to a multitude of children in the greater Philadelphia and surrounding area! Here is Karen ministering in the mid-1990s.*





*The Bob & Deidra Ewerth Family,  
circa 1991.*



*In 2009, Bob Ewerth received  
the Washington Bible College  
Alumni of the Year award.*



*Our Boston team, circa 1998. From left to right, Richard Burley, Eric Briscoe,  
Gordon Loop, a Boston police officer who became a friend of  
the ministry, Sue MacNeil, and Aaron Wentz.*



*Sue MacNeil ministered with our Boston team for many years and was an excellent children's worker.*

*Chip and Kim Wolfe teaming up with Karen Williams for a children's ministry, circa 2000.*





*The early days of Mark and Angela Kennedy's ministry with us took place in the Baltimore area. Mark (left) is conducting a meeting around 2004.*



*John Copell (left) is doing ministry at Boston University in this picture. He and his wife, Tiffany (below), were on staff from 2020 to 2022, ministering with our Boston team. Pictured with Tiffany are two of their youngest children, Asher and Aaron.*



*In 2008, George Naggy was promoted to heaven. Those attending his funeral included, from left to right, Eric Briscoe, John Cutlip, Art Williams, Fred Kornis, and Bob Ewerth.*





*Zane Dempsie (above) counseling, circa 2009.*



*Minneapolis staff member, Ken Teeter (below), at the board, circa 2011.*



*Sarah Cain (above) served with us from 2009 to 2011 in the state of Maine.*



*Pastor Peter Bogart (above) was Bob Ewerth's pastor for many years in the Philadelphia area. Peter is a good friend of the ministry and has helped us in multiple ways. His church provided office space for Bob, which, along with Peter's advice, counsel, and friendship through the years, has been a great blessing and encouragement.*



*Chris and Amy Reick were part of our Baltimore team from 2013 to 2017.*



*Mark and Shelby Sohmer (picture circa 2014) were on staff with us for 10 years working with the Boston team.*



*Sue Goss received our training in 2013, came on staff in 2020, and ministered for a year in the state of Arkansas.*



*Randy Bockman participated in our 2015 Sketchboard Evangelism Training, subsequent Orientation/Candidate School, and ministered for a short time with us as our staff man in the Cincinnati, Ohio, area.*





*A young Kimberlee and Brian Harmon (above left) join Eric Briscoe for a time of training and outreach.*



*Rebecca Coates began OAC staff status as a single gal, then was married to Jimmy in 2021.*



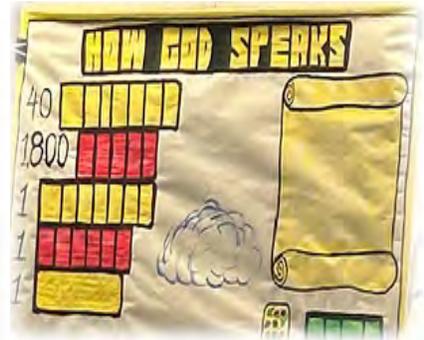
*Ed Neiman (left) and Erin Chervenak (right) starting their open-air ministry with us.*

*Frank Baldus has been on staff since 2011.*





Dan Beaudoin (above left) and his wife, Rebecca, came on staff in 2015 and established our NORCAL (Northern California) branch located in the Bay Area. His co-worker, Brenten Powers (above right) and his wife, Lena, joined them in 2020.



Scott Domont (left) and his wife, Christine (bottom left), served short-term with us in 2020, as staff interns in 2021, and full-time in 2024. They minister with our Michigan team.





*Juan and Dawn Monzon joined our USA staff after establishing OAC Paraguay and serving in that country for 22 years.*



*Ryan Itzel joined us in 2011 at the age of 16. He left in 2013 to attend college. He came back on staff in 2020, after graduating from school and marrying Tasia.*



*Barry Felis is a friend of OAC and a great blessing in the Los Angeles area.*



*Mike and Christine Wilson have been with us since 2016 and minister with our Michigan team.*



*Steve and Connie Johnson have been on staff since 2015, ministering in Iowa.*



*Tom Fox has known about OAC since the early 1980s. He joined us in 2009 and is married to Carmen.*



*Rick Moore (above) worked as a police officer for many years before trusting Christ. He and his wife, Dovie (below right), came on staff in 2007 and ministered for two years as interns in our Boston branch. Then, they moved to the Dallas, Texas, area to establish a branch of OAC, where they continue to live and conduct outreach.*



*Kurt Schafli (above) reaching Native Americans in Wyoming since 1991 after establishing OAC Switzerland in 1985.*

*Chris (right, at the board) and Bonnie McKinley have been with us since 2016 in the Manchester, New Hampshire, area.*



## **FUN FACT #17**

**During the 1980s and 1990s, our staff in the USA would, for the most part, wear similar clothing when ministering in the open air or representing the mission at local church gatherings or conference events. In those days, our official OAC "uniform" consisted of light blue shirts, red ties, dark blue blazers, and grey slacks. An OAC lapel pin (pictured here) was also part of the uniform dress and helped to identify us as official OAC staff.**



## **OAC-USA CONCLUSION**

God has abundantly blessed and expanded the work here in America into several new fields since that first Chicago meeting in 1956. OAC-USA staff are now based in Arizona, California, Florida, Idaho, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, and Wyoming. These areas serve as launching pads from which the ministry goes forth into many additional locations.

We are thankful for all the choice servants He has sent our way through the years, which make all of this ministry possible. Whether full-time staff, interns, retired, volunteers, short-term, board members, branch committee partners, financial donors, prayer supporters, or staff visiting from other OAC countries, all are integral to our work. We look forward, with anticipation, to what He has for us in the days ahead as we continue proclaiming Christ by all means everywhere.

