

Chapter 26

New Zealand



New Zealand is one of the most geographically isolated countries in the world, with a population of over 5 million across its two islands. The English began settling in New Zealand alongside the Tangata Whenua (indigenous people). On Christmas Day in 1814, Samuel Marsden was invited to preach the gospel by an influential chief, Ruatara, of the Ngāpuhi tribe. From that event, a mission station in New Zealand was opened, and over the next few decades, a revival spread among this nation's indigenous people.

New Zealand was the first overseas branch of Open Air Campaigners. Jim Duffecy and George Bremner conducted ministry here during 1953-54 and founded an OAC branch in Auckland and Wellington in 1954. The work expanded and flourished through effective training. One prime example of this is the Sowers Program, which was developed in the Philippines by New Zealand staff in 1975 (more about Sowers in chapter 30). In 1988, OAC released this program to a newly formed Sowers International organization headquartered in New Zealand. Sowers International continues to this day with multinational projects being conducted in Australia, Cote d'Ivoire, DR Congo, Ghana, India, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal, and New Zealand.



Through the years, God has used OAC NZ to provide many key people to establish, nurture, and advance the gospel, not only in New Zealand but around the world. Such individuals have included Gerald Bradley, George Bremner, Bryan Fruish, Noel Gibson, David Salisbury, Barry Tetley, and others.



DAVID WILSON

Ken Rout came on staff in 1965 and served until 1977, when he joined the SOWERS International team. He was promoted to heaven in 2024.

Another key person in OAC from New Zealand is David Wilson. He was born in this country, became an airline captain with Air New Zealand, then felt led to leave for the USA in 1967 to become an international missionary. After graduating from Bible college, he joined the OAC-USA staff in 1970 and subsequently became the director of the Baltimore-DC branch.



MARK BREETVELT

Moved by the Lord to an expanded international ministry, he formed the Overseas Ministries department, which is now known as Worldwide Proclamation (WP) and has been responsible for planting OAC branches in Bolivia, Brazil, Congo (DRC), Ecuador, South Asia, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Russia, and Ukraine. David also served as our OAC International president from 1996 to 2004 and traveled regularly to visit OAC branches in many countries where he encouraged and trained our staff.



JEREMY DEMPSEY

New Zealand also gave us workers who have conducted ministry outreach in the Philippines, Samoa, Vanuatu, and other Pacific islands and nations. Robert Siakimotu currently conducts extensive foreign outreach and served as our OAC international president from 2004 to 2012.

Lew Meyer and his wife, Angela, have been another example of New Zealand staff used by God in the work of OAC in this part of the world. Lew was the national director for several years, has a background in science and training at Massey University (BSc) and Biblical Studies (New Zealand Assembly Bible School). He participated in the six-week training seminar taught by Gerald Bradley in 1981, which led to working with OAC in New Zealand for over 35 years.



VICKI-LEE DEMPSEY

Over the years, God has blessed, and OAC NZ has expanded to include branches in Auckland, Hawke's Bay, Canterbury, Dunedin, Manawatu, Waikato, and the Bay of Plenty. The work in this nation is known as OAC - Outreach and Church Ministries NZ, and the national office is located in Hastings. This country has gifted staff who specialize in communicating the good news of Jesus to people who are generally outside the scope of routine church outreach. It works alongside local churches, leading people to faith in Christ and into fellowship with them. OAC in New Zealand is committed to taking the gospel into the world of the unconverted and equipping the Christian church to do the same. OAC evangelists across New Zealand regularly share the message of salvation by way of open-air programs, personal evangelism, holiday programs, youth events, door-to-door visitation, prison work, retirement homes, universities, and by any other means they can!



MARIA HENDERSON

In March 2020, Jeremy Dempsey, who had been on staff since 1997, took over as the national director. He aims to see a new generation of evangelists raised up to serve effectively in their communities and to teach others to do the same. As part of this vision, our work in New Zealand offers individuals opportunities to learn more about



EVAN KANGISHER



GLEN KRIEL

effectively communicating their faith and how to put these ideas into practice. Programs such as Total Involvement Evangelism, Understanding World Views, Summer Mission, Short-Term Missions, Internships, and Walk Thru the Bible seminars are just a few of the ways our staff train and equip believers to become more effective in evangelism and strong in their faith.



ROBERT SIAKIMOTU



SHANE LOUIE

Our leadership sees the ministry's current focus as reconnecting with the local church. With this purpose in mind, our staff lead and train summer mission teams. They have launched a program called "Community Chaplains." This program trains church people to be out in their communities, effectively presenting the gospel.



KEVIN SIMPSON

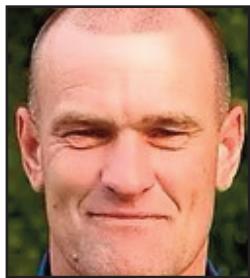
In addition, the School of Evangelism is a course that raises a new generation of evangelists who will work closely with the local church to mentor, equip, inspire, and resource them to effectively take the power of God for salvation (the gospel) into the community. The goal is for people to be transformed, discipled, and actively serving in their local church and the community.



LEW MEYER

It is a blessing and encouragement to train and equip Christians to share their faith. Here is a testimony from a former 18-year-old short-term mission worker named Charlotte who volunteered with our OAC New Zealand team:

Going on mission ignited a spark in me to be more passionate about spreading His Word and making it known to many more people. Being on mission made me want to increase my knowledge of God and His works so I could provide that information to others. It also gave me a realisation that I have so many brothers and sisters in Christ, all around the world!

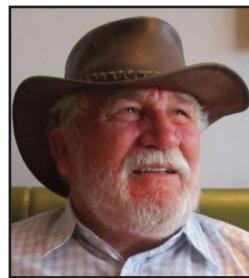


ROY OUWERKERK

We look forward to what God has for us in the days ahead as we "Present Christ By All Means Everywhere" and equip the church to do the same.



ANDREI TOMKINSON



STEVE WILLIAMS



MARTY SCHEIB



PHILIP WILLIAMSON

