

Chapter 10

Canada



*NORMAND GOSSELIN PREACHING
IN MONTREAL*

Canada has two official languages: French and English. The majority of Canadians speak English, while most native speakers of the French language live in the province of Quebec. This country is the first OAC branch where the gospel went forth regularly in a language other than Canadian English.

Jim Duffecy and his Australian team sailed to Canada in 1956 at the invitation of Oswald J. Smith, the pastor of The Peoples Church in Toronto. The purpose of this visit was to establish a permanent branch of OAC in North America, so a planned campaign to accomplish this took place at the Peoples Church. It wasn't until March 1957 that Bryce and Ruth Hartin officially established OAC Canada.

The history of OAC Canada changed direction in 1983, when Australian Norm Wyman and his wife, Shirley, retired to Australia, leaving the Canadians in charge of this work. Jim Duffecy was scheduled to speak at Wyman's retirement banquet, but suffered a heart attack, which took his life the night before this event. Thus began the "changing of the guard" into a new era. Through the years, Canadian staff, such as Cyril Shontoff and Normand Gosselin, took on leadership roles. Normand served for many years in Quebec. He and Cyril (who came to Christ at an open-air meeting in Toronto) were briefly jailed for preaching the gospel in Quebec in the early days of this ministry. Normand was promoted to heaven in 2020 at the age of 89.

Our work in Canada has OAC International ties, as two Canadians in a row (Tom Swan and Bob MacArthur) have served as presidents of OAC International and as directors of OAC in Canada.

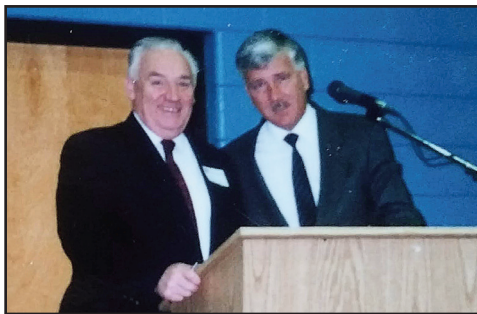
Tom Swan was the OACI president from 1983 to 1988. After his wife, Betty, passed away, he married Holly, and they lived in the Fonthill section of Pelham, Ontario. Before his ministry with OAC, Tom was an instructor in the Canadian Army and later an Associated Gospel Church pastor. He was also involved in the Truckers Chapel ministry for a time. God gave Tom the gift of helping organizations develop long-term vision strategies and then working with them to determine



TOM SWAN

how best to accomplish their goals through strategic planning. He created a basic and advanced training program for all Christian Service Brigade leaders across Canada. This helped shape the Canadian staff of that ministry into an effective team that facilitated ongoing contact with each of its 500+ church affiliations. During Tom's ministry in OAC leadership, his talents were extensively used by the Lord, extending beyond Canada into the USA work, as he partnered with the USA board of directors and management team to formulate and implement a long-term ministry vision, goals, and an overall strategic plan. Tom died in 2019 at the age of 99. At the time of this writing, his wife, Holly, is doing well and continues to live in the Fonthill area.

Bob MacArthur served as the national director of OAC Canada and also ministered as our OAC International president from 1988 to 1995, based in the Toronto area. He



BOB MACARTHUR (LEFT) WITH OAC BOARD MEMBER GARY PATRIQUIN IN THE 1990s

conducted open-air ministry in conjunction with The Peoples Church of Toronto during that time. As mentioned earlier, God used this church to help bring the work of OAC to North America from Australia in the 1950s. Since that time, it has been instrumental in developing prayer warriors, volunteers, financial supporters, and key leadership for OAC Canada. During his later years as OACI president, Bob and his wife, Ina, moved to the Vancouver, British Columbia, area, where he also served as the pastor of a local church.

Len Percival and his wife, Mildred, loved OAC's work and became quite involved soon after it arrived in North America from Australia. In 1956, he began leading open-air activity in the Ottawa area. Len was known far and wide not only as an evangelist and effective children's worker, but also as someone who could build and fix almost anything.

Len was a self-supported missionary with OAC, using his gifts of mechanical expertise as an employee at the National Research Council of Canada in Ottawa. He had a few notable inventions, including a specialized hospital bed and a new type of animal trap. He loved to put his inventing skills to work for the Lord. He would come up with great ways to enhance and multiply the work of evangelism. He was always a great promoter of OAC and loved our staff in Canada and around the world.



LEN PERCIVAL (RIGHT), "GRANDFATHER" OF OAC CANADA WITH THEN CHAIRMAN OF THE OAC CANADA BOARD, WELDON TAYLOR

Len especially enjoyed doing VBS meetings and organizing children's parades. He used a puppet many times and was known as "Uncle Len." He loved to use many visuals, which he creatively designed for communicating the gospel message. He also made the

first “preach-o-matic” portable sketchboard that we use today and developed several design variations for constructing sketchboards. Len also worked with teens on numerous occasions, getting many of them involved in the children’s ministry. He led a teen coffee-house outreach in downtown Ottawa for many years. The work in Ottawa continues today through Layton Kerr and can be directly traced back to Len’s faithful ministry in the Ottawa Valley.

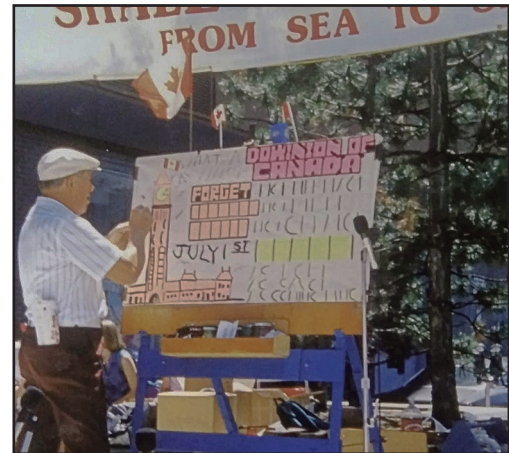
In his retirement years, Len remained active, helping OAC in many ways. He and Mildred traveled to Florida during the winter months, where they met with older Canadian staff and held open-air meetings on the beach and boardwalk. He served as an OAC Canada national board member for several years in the 2000s.

Mildred was promoted to heaven in 2006, and Len followed her in 2013. Up until the very end of his earthly life, Len was actively reaching people for Christ and had a rejoicing attitude.

OAC Canada partnered with Prairie Bible Institute (now Prairie College) in Alberta from 1977 to 2010 to equip the saints for the work of evangelism. This partnership resulted in annual or biannual seminars available as part of the for-credit course catalogue. From 1992 to 2010, Chip Welton led these seminars and, for many years, was assisted by Mike Bussen. There was also helpful assistance from others, including Professor Larry Tatlock (Mr. T), who loved OAC. Mike Bussen reports that Mr. T was the greatest Christian apologist he had ever known and must have been a savant, as he had a massive personal library of thousands of books he had read on apologetics. He loved it when Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses came to his door, often telling his children always to invite them in and say, "My dad has been waiting for you!" Hundreds of students were trained at Prairie College over the years, and some went on to join OAC.

We are thankful to God for all the wonderful workers He has brought our way. Individuals such as Ross Conwell, Tony Schaapman, and others have been a vital part of the team. Below are some of their stories.

Joe Spadafora was a member of The Peoples Church and, after retiring as a driving instructor, joined our team in the Toronto area as a volunteer worker. He loved to preach the gospel and ministered in the open air with OAC staff members Henry de Roos, Mike Bussen, and associate staff member Rick Johnson. Through the efforts of Bob



**CANADA DAY 1993 - LEN PERCIVAL
PREACHING IN OTTAWA**



**LEN PERCIVAL (LEFT-MIDDLE)
RETIREMENT PARTY**

MacArthur, Joe was recruited to join OAC Toronto as a retirement ministry, which allowed him to go out into the open air, usually once a week or so. He also conducted a kids' camp and was a wonderful, gentle, encouraging soul.



JOE SPADAFORA

Russ O'Neill first heard of Open Air Campaigners from Bob Williamson at a prayer meeting in Montreal back in 1975, about six months after being saved. Bob's wife had been saved at an OAC meeting in Toronto years before. From that first introduction, here is how God worked in the life of Russ and his wife, Lynn, as told by Russ.

During our first year at Prairie College (1977-81), Chuck Phelps, an OAC'er from Minneapolis was on campus for a week and announced that there would be an OAC seminar at Prairie College in the spring. My wife, Lynn, jabbed me in the ribs, saying, 'You know you've got to take that seminar!' Following the seminar in 1978, we as a family, spent our summers with OAC in Toronto, led by Norm Wyman.

Following graduation in 1981, we were invited on as full-time staff with OAC. While still at Prairie College, the school gave me permission to organize a team of individuals who had taken the seminar to set up on campus and preach in the open air using OAC techniques and advertise the coming seminar, which was held annually in the spring at Prairie College. We also had a team which would go into Calgary at the Eighth Avenue Mall to preach. It was there that I preached for my first time in the open air; and it was there that I sensed the Lord's "Amen" and that this would be a vital part of my life and ministry.

Lynn and I stayed with OAC through 1985, and for a year, our home church and the elders of Parkway Bible Church in Scarborough, Ontario, became our 'mission board' cutting us loose to the work to which God had called us. This would eventually lead us to evangelistic ministry in the Republic of Ireland with Gary Weeks and his family and eventually in March of 1996 into pastoral ministry. We spent the first 22 years of our Christian lives on the outside trying to get people inside – now we have spent the last 22 years on the inside trying to get people outside!

Along with pastoral ministry, there were always evangelistic mission trips with folks from the church. Open-air ministry was always a part of those missions. I cannot believe how the Lord used five brushes and five pots of paint and an old rickety



LYNN AND RUSS O'NEILL

sketchboard, along with three ropes, to present the gospel to countless thousands of people over the past many years. I am eternally grateful for all that Open Air Campaigners did to shape my life and ministry in 'Drawing Men and Women to Christ.' Those same paints and brushes got me into numerous churches and countries as I would meet ministers and church leaders on the streets and then receive invitations to speak and train evangelistic teams and hold children's meetings and camp work – no end to the opportunities that the OAC methods of evangelism opened up. To God be all the glory, for He alone can take a straight shot with a crooked stick.



Another team member, Doug Giesbrecht, learned about OAC and participated in the training seminar at Prairie College with Ross Conwell and Russ O'Neill in 1984. Doug was an associate staff member with us from 1986 to 1988 as a Prairie College student. He and Gloria came on staff with OAC Canada in 1988, stepped away for a year around 1992, and then came back on staff, where he served until 1996. Doug went home to be with the Lord in 2019.

There has often been a close connection between the Canadian and American branches. Through the years, joint staff conferences have been held in Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal, and Los Angeles. Two Americans (Chip Welton and Mike Bussen) have served on the Canadian staff; they and their children have dual citizenship.

Chip Welton participated in the OAC training seminar while at Bible college in the US. He then completed a "Summer of Service" program with OAC. It was at that time that he met his future wife, Tammy, who was a member of the OAC-USA staff team in the Philadelphia area. After graduation and marrying Tammy, Chip pastored for a time but came to realize his calling was that of an evangelist.



CHIP WELTON (AT THE BOARD) PREACHING IN MONTREAL WITH TONY SCHAAPMAN TRANSLATING FOR HIM

Chip and Tammy Welton moved from West Virginia to Canada in November 1990 and spent the next 10 years in Ottawa, Ontario, the nation's capital. He was the OAC Canadian national director from 1992 to 2004, working with staff such as Tony Schaapman in Montreal, Bob Kentfield in Ottawa, and others. Since August 2000, Chip and Tammy have lived in Alberta, focusing their energy for the first ten years on reaching the lost in Calgary and serving

as Evangelist in Residence at Prairie College. Since 2010, Chip has continued to be involved in evangelism in Calgary, working with Greg Barclay in the western region of the country, and increasingly involved in the work of Worldwide Proclamation (WP), the OAC Overseas Ministry Branch founded by David Wilson.

Chip first served as WP's field director and was appointed director on July 3, 2018, when David Wilson transitioned into the field director position.



CHIP WELTON PREACHING ON CANADA DAY IN OTTAWA DURING THE 1990s

Mike Bussen is also known as “Mick” by some and as “Tricky Mickey” to many children. He and his wife, Renae, are from Minnesota. They were introduced to OAC and fell in love with the ministry while attending Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. Mike participated



MIKE BUSSEN - 1990s IN OTTAWA

in the 1984 OAC training seminar alongside Ross Conwell and other great Chicago staff. After other mission ventures, they felt God was calling them to OAC, so they contacted USA staff member Chuck Phelps in Minnesota. He connected them with the Canadian national director Bob MacArthur, who was also the OAC International President at the time. Bob invited them to join him in Canada in 1990. They made the move and served for more than 17 years on the Canadian staff.

During that time, God moved Mike and his family (with four kids in tow) from

Toronto to Ottawa in Ontario, then west to Alberta, and finally back east to Ontario. Numerous ministry trips were made to spread the gospel to multitudes of kids, youth, and adults from coast to coast and many in between. They give glory to God for the blessing of working with (and learning much from) tremendous staff partners like Chip Welton, Len Percival, Bob Kentfield, Tony Schaapman, and Henry de Roos, as well as many great volunteers. Much fruitful ministry was done in teamwork with them all. They helped train many more laborers for the Lord's harvest at multiple OAC seminars during those years. Since conducting ministry in the winter months was a challenge, Mike was blessed to take multiple winter trips to do fruitful ministry in the USA and internationally. During one trip to the Bahamas, Mike linked up with OAC Ottawa volunteer Henry de Roos. Henry had gone to teach in a mission high school in Eleuthera, Bahamas, and

was considering returning to teach in Canada at the end of that year. However, God had other plans! Mike took the opportunity to invite Henry to consider coming back to join OAC Canada instead, which he did. In God's providence, Henry later became the national director of OAC Canada, where he continues to serve faithfully and fruitfully. In 2008, Mike felt called by God to help meet the expressed need for more administrative staff at the Central Services office in Nazareth, Pennsylvania. This office helps facilitate the ministries of staff in Canada, the USA, and around the world, as well as joining in on evangelistic outreaches and training in the Eastern Pennsylvania region. They are glad to serve wherever the Lord has planted them.

Bob Kentfield and Layton Kerr are staff members whom God raised up to minister in the Canadian National Capital Region of Ottawa, Ontario. Bob was active with the Ottawa branch, working with Mike Bussen and Chip Welton in the 1990s. When both Mike and Chip left Ottawa to minister in other OAC branches, Bob served as the OAC director in Ottawa until Layton Kerr took the position in 2006, when Bob retired. Bob was influential in Layton's life during the 1990s, introducing him to the street ministry while Chip and Mike were still in Ottawa. Layton attended the same church as Bob, which allowed him to become very familiar with and exposed to the ministry of open-air evangelism. The Lord placed a desire to share the gospel in Layton's heart, and God used Bob and the ministry of Open Air Campaigners as a tremendous encouragement. They spent many Friday nights ministering together and became good friends. Today, the Kerrs serve the Lord full-time



BOB KENTFIELD AT THE SKETCHBOARD



LAYTON KERR SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

with OAC in Ottawa, Canada. Layton, his wife, Deborah, and their children are all involved in serving in street outreach, VBS clubs, children's programs, and much more. In 2010, God used their ministry of reaching people out in the open air to plant a new local church called Downtown Outreach Bible Chapel.



HENRY AND KARA DE ROOS FAMILY

Henry de Roos has been a missionary evangelist with OAC Canada since 1996 and has served as the Canadian director since 2004. He and his wife, Kara, have been blessed with eight children and started experiencing the joys of grandparenting in 2015! Henry had the privilege of earning two degrees in Science from the University of Guelph (BSc, MSc) and a degree in Education (B.Ed) from the University of Western Ontario. He worked in Biochemical Research at a pharmaceutical company for 1 year and taught high school chemistry for 6 years before joining OAC Canada. Henry was able to put his education to good use in OAC by partnering with Answers In Genesis and Creation Ministries International for a time, conducting creation-apologetic gospel seminars in churches and public high schools. Like many Open Air Campaigners staff, Henry's ministry has been multi-faceted. Over the years, he has done regular open-air outreach in Toronto and other Ontario communities. He, along with his family, have often gone to parks, beaches, and festivals to share the gospel. Administrative responsibilities, evangelism training, children's ministries, evangelistic community events, and, most recently, outreach to the Amish folks in his area, have all been part of Henry's ministry endeavors.



HENRY DE ROOS PROCLAIMING CHRIST



JOSÉE MACKENZIE

Josée MacKenzie was on staff from 1997 until around 2004. She was greatly used of God in the schools in Quebec and did much ministry, leading dramas and outreach teams in the Ottawa Valley.

In 2002, Greg & Tara Barclay moved their family to Three Hills, Alberta, where he met Chip Welton. He began going out into the open air to conduct evangelistic

outreach with Chip right away and knew, without a doubt, that this was what God had called him to do. He completed the OAC training course and then joined the staff in 2003. Now, he is the director of the Calgary, Alberta, branch and works with a great team of evangelists from around the



GREG & TARA BARCLAY

world. Greg has hosted individuals from the USA, has been to Mexico, Argentina, and Peru, presenting Christ, and will continue to travel in the future, especially to Mexico.



Robin, like the woman at the well, has met Jesus and wants to waste no more time in telling her village. She believes that the gospel hasn't diminished in power and wants to be a part of the harvest. She attended university for 9 years and graduated with a doctorate in Veterinary Medicine from Guelph in 1996. After practicing small animal medicine for a decade, she hung up the stethoscope to homeschool her six children and

continues to do so (minus the eldest, who is now attending a second-year university!). Her OAC ministry currently involves evangelistic classes in local libraries for Bible study and discipleship, children's initiatives in high-density, subsidized housing complexes to connect with children, Awana, and speaking at conferences.

Mike and Susan Nelson have been richly blessed with nine children. They currently live in Mitchell, Ontario, and minister primarily in Midwestern Ontario. Mike and Susan have been growing as individuals and as a couple since being married in 1996. Early in their marriage, they came to realize that if Jesus is who He says He is and the Bible is the Word of God, then those truths demanded changes in their lives. With those changes came the desire for ministry work and to serve His church more deliberately. Mike was first introduced to the OAC ministry while volunteering with Henry de Roos. Mike is excited to continue pursuing opportunities for street evangelism among adults and children, as well as his involvement in prison ministry and his coming alongside local churches to offer biblical financial stewardship as an outreach to their communities. Before joining OAC Ministries Canada, Mike had been working in the financial services industry since 1991.



MIKE AND SUSAN NELSON FAMILY



ROLAND AND BRITTANY PINGST FAMILY

Roland Pingist shares the following: When I moved from my home country Austria to Canada to study at Prairie College, I looked at a map of Alberta and saw that Three Hills, where Prairie College is located, is only about an hour away from Calgary. I wondered whether there was a missions team that would regularly go on outreaches to Calgary to do evangelism. Within five days of my arrival in Canada, I was introduced to Chip Welton, who invited me to weekly outreaches to Calgary with

OAC. From 2007-2010, I volunteered with OAC Canada, regularly doing open-air outreaches in Calgary, as well as mission trips to Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina. During the mission trip to Brazil, I felt the Lord's calling to go to Brazil as a full-time missionary. In 2011, we joined OAC Canada as full-time missionaries and left for Brazil in 2012. From 2012 until 2015, we worked in partnership with OAC Brazil in doing outreaches in schools, drug recovery homes, juvenile prisons, on the street, and in the Amazon. God gave us a heart to invest more into the outreaches amongst indigenous people in the Amazon, and thus, we moved from the state of São Paulo to the state of Rondônia in 2015 to partner with a German mission agency (Deutsche Indianer Pionier Mission – DIPM) and their Brazilian agency Missão Evangelica Únida (MEU), who have been working for over 50 years amongst indigenous people. While we continued being on staff with OAC Canada, we simply switched our Brazilian partner mission, as we focused more on reaching indigenous people for Christ. We have been involved in teaching at small indigenous Bible schools, doing regular children's ministry, and evangelism in various indigenous villages of the Cinta Larga people. During our home assignments to Canada (2016 and 2018), we continued regular outreaches in Calgary. We thank the Lord for the ministry of OAC and are glad to be part of this international ministry.



ROLAND AND BRITTANY USE A VARIETY OF VISUAL AIDS TO TEACH SPIRITUAL TRUTH

Jake and Margie Penner came on staff in 2019 and live in the Manitoba area, conducting prison ministry and community outreach with churches in addition to a family music ministry. God led them to launch a ministry called Harbour Lights Ministries in 2002 when they invited widows to their home for a Christmas banquet. They never expected this simple act of kindness to blossom into a full-time ministry reaching people all across North America. In 2010, the doors opened for the Penner family to join Gospel Express Ministries as the Harbour Lights singing team. Through the connections made in prisons across Canada, the United States, and Belize, they realized that they were singing to the fatherless.



Unintentionally, they found themselves ministering to both of the groups mentioned in James 1:27. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Today, Harbour Lights Ministries has an office and board of directors in Arborg, MB (Canada). They currently work under the legal umbrella of OAC. Their personnel consists of one traveling team (the Jake Penner family) and dozens of volunteers across Manitoba. They minister through music, chalk art, seminars, and preaching in a variety of venues, which include churches, community centers, prisons, and senior homes.



BETTY LAU MINISTERS IN BOTH CANADA AND FRANCE

Some of the newest staff members are Leah Weiss and Isabel Romanchuck (see chapter 13) along with Betty Lau. The Lord has called Betty to minister in both Canada and France.

Kirk Hubick was ministering as a pastor at a local church when Henry de Roos was on a Creation speaking tour through Canada's Eastern provinces. Henry spoke at Kirk's church and, while there, took Kirk and some from their church to conduct open-air outreach meetings in a nearby city. Kirk was overwhelmed with joy at the response of those who heard and appreciated the methodology of the OAC approach. He made plans to participate in our Sketchboard Evangelism Training course in Boston. Kirk, his wife, Denise, and their four children joined us in 2006 and had a productive ministry in the East Coast before the Lord led them to leave in 2012. Kirk still conducts open-air evangelism as time permits.



KIRK HUBICK AND FAMILY

What is OAC Canada's vision for the future? Henry de Roos, national director, sums it up as follows: "First, we will continue to encourage more staff to join in the great commission here in Canada, seeking the Lord to double our workforce in God's timing so that we can reach out to Vancouver, Winnipeg, Montreal, and Halifax. Second, we have great volunteers and will continue to encourage partnerships with churches, as a source of volunteers and exposure to our mission and outreaches. Thirdly, since one million immigrants arrive in Canada every three years, we want to target ethnic immigrant communities in the greater Toronto area with special OAC teams in partnerships with churches."

