

# SPOTLIGHT ON MISSION

Positive stories. Valuable work.



## Gideons celebrate century of ministry

*100 years later, Canadian Gideons still feel a passion for sharing God's Word*

GUELPH, ON—The year was 1911. The Dominion of Canada was in the midst of change and the winds of a general election were beginning to swirl. Free trade with the United States and the creation of a national navy were on the minds of most Canadians.

The world was generally at peace and a web of treaties between European powers was maintaining a fragile sense of calm. No one had any inkling of the Great War just around the corner.

Instead, people's minds were taken up with the latest inventions of the day—dramatic “flying machines,” Ford's Model T cars and a myriad of electrical wonders.

Consumers were beginning to switch to disc-shaped vinyl records, purchase candlestick telephones for their homes, and spend more evenings watching silent movies. There were no televisions, computers or smart phones. Electric refrigerators, washing machines and ranges were not yet in the home.

This was the world in which a new association called The Gideons International In Canada was formed. Its mission as a group of Christian businessmen was simple: to win the lost for Christ and to encourage each other in their own spiritual walk. This secondary point was the reason Gideons started to place Bibles in hotels in the first place.

### Ministry milestones

The new association's first task was to purchase and place Bibles in Canadian hotels where members stayed during their travels. The first to receive these Bibles in 1911 was the King Edward in the heart of Toronto, one of the newest and most luxurious hotels in North America (pictured above).

Over the years, as membership grew and other



*“The world...is still filled with lonely, lost people who need to discover God's Word.”*

avenues of distribution were approved, Scriptures began to be placed in other public places, such as hospitals, prisons and other institutions. The goal was always to see people come to Christ.

The Canadian army received Bibles in 1939. Shortly after the Second World War, Grade 5 students received Gideon New Testaments for the first time, the beginning of a tradition that continues in some schools today.

Ministry involvement in foreign countries has also been a high priority for Canadian Gideons,

with members participating in Scripture distributions in villages and cities around the world. This occurred for the first time in a hotel in Jerusalem in 1927 and has continued to be in sharp focus.

How does an organization like The Gideons, often thought of as invisible, know it's making a difference? The rewards come in the form of letters from people all over the world who share their stories of being impacted by the Scriptures they found or were given—and having their life journeys set on a new course.

### Unchanging mission

The world has changed, of course, since the early days of The Gideons. In the midst of the dramatic technological advances, Canada has also changed socially. Avenues of distribution have narrowed or closed, and Canadian society has generally become more secular. Religious material, Christian or otherwise, is not embraced as it once was.

Despite these changes, The Gideons believe the nature of man is still the same. “Science has not cured the selfish heart or the sinful mind. Humans still kill each other, enslave themselves to addictions, and hurt the ones they love. Man is still lost without Christ” (*The Canadian Gideon*, January 2011).

Today's Gideons feel compelled to fulfil their mission, not despite the scientific progress of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but because of it. “The world is faster, busier, and more instantaneously connected—but it is still filled with lonely, lost people who need to discover God's Word” (*The Canadian Gideon*).

As the organization celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the focus of The Gideons in Canada is on the future—and the steps needed to be an active, relevant, contemporary arm of the Church, sharing God's Word with the world.

## Spots

### Ministry Milestones

- 1911** Canadian Gideons formed
- 1911** First hotel Bibles placed at King Edward Hotel, Toronto
- 1918** First hospital Bibles placed at Victoria Hospital, London
- 1923** Auxiliary organized in Canada for wives of Gideons
- 1927** First Bibles provided by Canadian Gideons internationally – King David Hotel, Jerusalem
- 1933** First Bibles in correctional institutions
- 1936** First Bibles in public schools
- 1938** Bibles placed on Trans Canada Airlines
- 1939** Bibles placed in army camps
- 1941** Personal Testament distribution to Armed Forces
- 1946** Grade 5 student personal distributions
- 1949** New Testaments given to student nurses
- 1957** University distribution of personal New Testaments
- 1958** First Bibles placed in medical and dental offices
- 1973** French Scriptures produced for Québec
- 1976** Nurse Testament program
- 1982** First sidewalk distributions to youth
- 2008** Testament Insert Program with local churches initiated
- 2008** Gideon Expressions card collection unveiled
- 2011** Association celebrates its 100th anniversary

## Partner With Us in Sharing God's Word

### With Your Church

Gideons work hand-in-hand with local churches, bringing the lost into churches where they can grow strong as new believers.

For over 100 years, churches have supported The Gideons by providing qualified members, hosting Gideon events, and partnering with us financially.

Today the newly created Testament Insert Program (T.I.P.) is helping churches reach their communities using a Gideon Testament plus an insert card promoting the local church.

**Call today to find out how The Gideons can help your church reach its neighbours for Christ.**



### With Your Time

Nothing is quite as rewarding as offering someone a Bible or New Testament and watching God work in their life. That's what membership in The Gideons is all about: connecting people with God's Word.

Today the Gideons International In Canada is in a unique place in its history: the future is wide open. Men and women are working together to put Scriptures in people's hands.

New members are plugged into a local Gideon “camp,” where their natural gifts are used in distribution, fundraising, administration, or working with churches.

**Call today to find out how you can help share God's Word by becoming a member of The Gideons.**

### With Your Finances

Offering Bibles and New Testaments for free is a wonderful gift The Gideons provide—but obviously requires money to make it possible.

At The Gideons, all operating costs are covered by the membership, including administration and home office staffing. This means every dollar of your donation is allocated to the purchasing and placing of Scriptures.

Every \$3.00 purchases and places 1 Scripture.

**Make a donation today. Visit our website or call our toll free number below to make a donation using a credit card.**



**Toll Free 1-888-482-4253**

THE GIDEONS INTERNATIONAL IN CANADA • [www.gideons.ca](http://www.gideons.ca)

