

National AOTS Newsletter

Vol. 3, No. 3. September 1980.



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AOTS is a movement of United Church men founded in 1923 and dedicated to promoting Christian fellowship, deepening the spiritual life of men, and developing effective programs of Christian service. Clubs are active across Canada, from Vancouver Island to Newfoundland, and in Bermuda, and are united under the National Association. The Newsletter is published by the National Association for the exchange of information between clubs and individual members. It appears four times a year: February, April, September and November from the office of the Executive Secretary: G. Allan Smith, #602 70 Baif Boulevard, Richmond Hill, Ontario, L4C 5L2.

National Association of United Church AOTS Men's Clubs

The United Church of Canada

"I am among you As One That Serves." Luke 22:27.

COMING EVENTS

- September 13 - Meeting of Humber Presbytery District Council, St. Anthony U.C. (AOTS MC), St. Anthony, Nfld.
- September 13-14 - 25th Annual Stanhope Men's Conference, Stanhope, P.E.I.
- September 19-21 - 25th Annual Men's Fellowship Rally, Loon Bay Camp, Nfld. Speaker: Rev. W. J. Baker, Cochrane Street U.C., St. John's (immediate past executive secretary of Newfoundland Conference). Arrangements by Memorial U.C. AOTS Men's Club, Grand Falls.
- October 2 - Consecon U.C. AOTS Men's Club, 20th Anniversary Celebration. Speaker: Rev. Don Pipe, Montreal (minister at Consecon when the club was founded).
- October 3-5 - 22nd Manitoba Laity Conference, Lakeside Centre, Gimli. Speaker: H. B. Duckworth, president, University of Winnipeg, on "Faith, Science and Society". Dr. Duckworth is a nuclear physicist.
- October 17-19 - 26th Annual Banff Men's Conference, Banff, Alberta. Speaker: Rev. Ted Scott, Primate, Anglican Church of Canada, on "The Influence of Affluence".
- October 18 - Hamilton Conference AOTS/UCM Fall Rally, Melrose U.C., Hamilton. Subject: "Ethical Dilemmas of the Day". Resource leaders: Rev. Dr. Robin Smith and Rev. Robert Lindsay, associate secretaries, Division of Mission.
- ** October 24th - Final mailing date for material for November 15th issue of the Newsletter
- October 26 - Meeting of Tri-County District Council, Park Street U.C., Chatham, Ont.
- November 7-9 - Annual Meeting of the National Council, National Association of United Church AOTS Men's Clubs, Cedar Glen Conference Centre, Bolton, Ontario.
- November 9 - Toronto Conference AOTS Rally, Cedar Glen, Ontario, 2:30 to 8:30 PM (following the Annual Meeting of the National Council). Speaker: Dr. Murray McPherson, "Who is My Neighbour?".
- November 15 - Belleville Presbytery AOTS Round-Up. For information contact sec.-treas. Ross Adams at (613)392-4258.
- November 15-16 - Victoria Avenue U.C. AOTS Men's Club, 25th Anniversary Celebration, Chatham, Ontario. Speaker: Dr. Bob McClure.
- April 10-12/81 - 1981 AOTS Ontario Round-Up, Geneva Park (Note: 2 weeks earlier than usual).
- August 21-23/81- 12th Biennial Convention, National Association of U.C. AOTS Men's Clubs, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta.

Life Membership

The presentation of a Life Membership in the National Association of U.C. AOTS Men's Clubs was made to Frank Baker on April 27th, on the occasion of a Loon Bay reunion at Botwood U.C., in Botwood, Newfoundland. The presentation was made by conference AOTS president Cyril Locke. Frank has many years of AOTS service behind him, as former Botwood club president, founder and first president of the Central Newfoundland District Council, and as member of the National Council 1959-61. He is also cited as having given generously of his time to the Bible Society, the Gideons, and to lay preaching, while at the same time managing a successful business career.

NICARAGUA -- A New Opportunity for Christian Service

Our energetic honorary president, Dr. Bob McClure, who despite his 80 years (his 80th is on November 23/80) is not yet prepared to take a rest, has now turned some of his attention to the needs of the people of the Nicaraguan revolution. He describes two hospitals where help in the form of medicines and equipment is urgently needed. One is a 35-bed unit in Puerto Cabezas, an eastern sea-coast town in the northern part of the country 75 miles south of the border with Honduras, and the other a 120-bed unit in Bilwaskarma, a community north-west of Puerto Cabezas just inside that border. Both hospitals are administered by the Moravian Church. In fact, Bilwaskarma is essentially a church community serving the rural population of the area rather than a town in the ordinary sense; all the people are Christians and the whole of their lives is centred around the church and its community programs. Dr. McClure describes the organization of the church as "marvelous", says there is a wide sharing of responsibilities by the people and that it is 90 percent self-supporting. The United Church is in Bilwaskarma in the person of Rev. Eric Snider. He came since the revolution (after 10 years experience elsewhere in the country) at the request of the Moravian Church to conduct a program in Christian education.

Some examples of medical needs cited by Dr. McClure are the following:

(a) hospital equipment, items costing between \$500 and \$5000. For example, they lack the equipment to prepare their own intravenous solutions and must import them from the United States. What is needed is a water distillation unit, an item costing about \$2000. Having distilled water they could then prepare whatever pure solutions they require. Another example is a sterilizer, a \$5000 item, for sterilizing instruments, dressings, sponges, etc.

(b) medicines, for example, anti-malarial drugs, antivenin for snake bite, and rabies vaccine. Thus, rabies vaccine costs about \$100 per set of treatments (one shot a day for 14 days); the requirement is one set of vaccine per case -- one set saves one life.*

Turning to other areas of need identified by Dr. McClure, there is, of course, "Insulin for the Children" in Zaire, described in the last Newsletter. He continues to send as much insulin as funds permit. Another is scholarships for the training of medical doctors in India, at the rate of \$3000 per student, this being sufficient to meet 75% of the cost of the total program. Dr. McClure says there are excellent medical schools in India and that Indian students should be encouraged to take their training there and remain to serve the Indian people; too often, he says, those trained in North American schools do not return to their homeland.

If you would like to share in any of this work, either as an individual or as a club, send your donation to: McClure's Special Fund, c/o The Treasurer, The United Church of Canada, 85 St. Clair Avenue East, Toronto, Ontario. M4T 1M8. The gift will be acknowledged and you will receive a receipt for tax purposes.

*It was an incident involving rabies that led Bob McClure, at age 13, to the decision to become a doctor. His father, then hospital administrator as well as the only qualified physician and surgeon at Weihwei in the North Honan mission field in China (see "The China Years", Chap. 4), had just lost a patient to hydrophobia, an eight-year old girl bitten by a rabid dog and brought to him too late to be saved. So exhausting and depressing was the case for his father that Bob felt its impact as well. Earlier he had warned Bob, when explaining why he shot a strangely behaving dog with the rifle he always carried with him in the village: "That poor beast had rabies. If you're in doubt never give the dog the benefit of the doubt. Hydrophobia is a terrible way to die."

A further word about Nicaragua, the Sandinist revolution, and the Moravian Church. In the words of Roman Catholic priest Fernando Cardenal of Nicaragua, minister in the new government in charge of the nation-wide "Literacy Crusade" (as reported by the Division of World

Outreach, quarterly documentation, June 1980): "This is the first revolution in history not to begin by destroying its opponents, the first to respect such Christian values as forgiveness, humanity and love of the neighbour. It is the first in which Christians have taken part in massive numbers. If the attempt to combine revolution and Christianity continues to succeed, it will be attempted, too, in other places in Latin America, but if it fails here, people everywhere will say that such a combination is possible nowhere in the world!" And he adds: "It is not in spite of, but because I am a Christian, that I am working in the new government". This is true also of his brother Ernesto Cardinal, Minister of Education, of the Foreign Secretary (a Jesuit), and "of many other members of the revolutionary government". And the revolution is said to have the support also of "the vast majority of the members of the Catholic and Protestant churches", and that this is an active rather than passive support.

It is Dr. McClure's opinion, too, that this is indeed a unique revolution, an assessment reached when he and Mrs. McClure visited Nicaragua and the two hospitals for two weeks in July, his visit coinciding with the first anniversary of the revolution on July 19th. He was particularly impressed by the "Literacy Crusade", in which, beginning in March of this year, for about five months, some 70,000 school children aged 12 and up were taken from the schools and enlisted to help teach the rudiments of reading and writing to the illiterate, estimated to number more than one million of the 2.4 million population. The result to date, he says, has been to reduce illiteracy to less than 15 percent.

And the role of the Moravian Church? This church, which had its origins in Moravia and Bohemia (now Czechoslovakia; from among the followers of John Huss after his death in 1415) as a reform church laying great stress on purity of morals and the simple teachings of Christ and the apostles, though small in numbers has had world-wide influence through its missionary activities. Thus, it was early into this field (1732) and was first among the Protestants to declare that the evangelization of the heathen was the duty of the church. It began this activity among the Eskimos and Indians of North America, and is said to have gained more members from among the heathen than it has had in its home churches. With North American headquarters in Bethlehem, Pa., it has been particularly active in the Caribbean and Central America, for over 100 years, and in Nicaragua since about 1900, serving the Miskito people, the indigenous Indians of that area. Its policy has been to combine a deep spirituality with an active concern for the social needs of the people. Hence, its early activity in education, dating from about 1850, and in medical services, of which the two hospitals are a part. So successful has it been and so important has it become in the lives of the people that the new government asked the Church to continue its work. This is seen as an act of trust as well as evidence of the desire of the government to use in the best possible way whatever resources are available to it. Eric Snider's presence in Bilwaskarma represents the only mission activity of the United Church in Nicaragua apart from funding support for certain agencies.

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I N M E M O R I A M

Dr. Doug Sparling, member of Oak Bay U.C. AOTS Men's Club, Victoria, B.C., and Minister Emeritus, suddenly on March 26, 1980.

Herman Walker, Langley U.C. AOTS Men's Club, Langley, B.C., for many years club treasurer, earlier this year.

Seth Duffus, charter member of St. Andrew's U.C. AOTS Men's Club, Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, in May, in his 88th year.

Jim Marshall, long-time member of St. Andrew's U.C. AOTS Men's Club, Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, in June.

Josh Donnan, long-time active member of Bellefair U.C. AOTS Men's Club, Toronto, Ontario, by a heart attack, on July 26, 1980.

CLUB NEWS

Considering that these have been summer months the "score" is quite good: 18 clubs communicating, including a remarkable 7* for the first time. A special welcome to these clubs; we identify you with an asterisk*. So the total on our list of those who have reported since November 1979 is now 36, giving us a current batting average of exactly .500. We invite others to write, sending your material to: The Executive Secretary, G. Allan Smith, #602 70 Baif Blvd., Richmond Hill, Ont. L4C 5L2. Next deadline: in the mail by Oct. 24th.

BRITISH COLUMBIA Conference, 8 clubs reporting, 7 from that hot bed of AOTS activity, Vancouver Island!

Fairfield U.C., Victoria (#685), another fine "inspired" newsletter, for May, reporting the visit of a Pope at the April 1st meeting, namely nature photographer George Pope, with an excellent presentation on the wild flowers of the Pacific Northwest, one of our many valuable natural heritages. Paid-up members total 43 (up from 39 last year) with more expected. \$100 was donated to the Harry Colnett Memorial Fund.

Gordon U.C., Victoria (#757), May and July newsletters, the latter a detailed report on the events of the past year and introducing the new executive headed by Larry Buchanan returning as president. The club ran a full program of monthly meetings which included a number of interesting talks plus a Dine-the-Ladies Night, visited or were visited by five other Island clubs, conducted several projects in support of local church needs: a new fence (\$1300), bibles for the Sunday School, signs for church offices and rooms, church murals, improvements to grounds and buildings, etc., and made donations to the Sunday School (\$100), the Diabetes Association, the Harry Colnett Memorial Fund, and the AOTS Second Mile Fund (\$100). Looking ahead, four members have already been named as delegates to the 1981 National Convention to be held in Calgary!

Duncan U.C., Duncan (#016), five press clippings and three notes by Don Morton. Our largest club continues with a very active program under president Jock Gillatt, assisted by 18 past presidents as still-active members. Remarkable! In April, a talk on the very important fishing industry of the Pacific coast and the stocking of Island streams; the 26th renewal of the Annual Mother's Day Spring Tea on May 10th, a "social success", "one of the pleasant easy projects of the year", raising \$280; a work party in May for clean-up and various improvements to the George Pringle Memorial Camp at Shawnigan Lake; a "fast-moving fun-filled" garage sale on June 7th, raising \$2055 (by 35 men in just 3 hours!) to furnish a room in the new Cowichan Intermediate Care Hospital; "plant tour" of a 60-acre dairy farm on June 19th; the annual Fun Fare on June 26th; and a visit by the Tabor Heights Bell Ringers Choir of Mount Tabor United Methodist Church, Portland, Oregon, on June 30th. Not to mention a donation of \$1000 to their Committee of Stewards and an undertaking to sell 4000 boxes of nuts this fall. And in spare (?) time: interclub visits on the Island to Gordon, Brechin, Oak Bay, Cowichan Lake, and Chemainus-Ladysmith. What a really interesting program; no wonder there are 75 members.

Cowichan Lake U.C., Cowichan Lake (#317), a note and press clipping (courtesy Don Morton). On June 21st the club's eight members mustered a turnout of 41 members and wives (including 14 visitors from Duncan) in a farewell meeting and party for their Rev. Don MacNeill, who is leaving to accept a new charge in the McBride area. His successor is to be Rev. Tom Redpath of Essex Presbytery in Ontario. A chicken dinner, tributes to Don MacNeill, a presentation to him by president Bob Theissen, music and singing comprised the program enjoyed by everyone. Club donations include: \$500 to the church for oil and hydro bills, Sunday School \$50 (for their foster child in Jamaica), Boy Scouts Building Fund \$50, and \$25 for purchase of B.C. Youth Parliament bonds. The club is also a member of the Bible-a-Month Club of the Canadian Bible Society.

Oak Bay U.C., Victoria (#404), letter from secretary Doug MacDonald plus notes by Don Morton. Their 7th Annual Auction Sale, April 26th, run jointly with the UCW, netted the club \$1676 (UCW - \$309) and "much good fellowship". Earlier in March a club-sponsored concert by the Arion Male Voice Choir had raised \$225. Joining them at the well-attended (43) April meeting were four men from Duncan led by district council president Ernie Stafford, another in the Island's many interclub visitations. The club wound up the year on June 3rd with the annual Ladies Night and election and installation of a new executive, then on June 28th hosted the Tabor Heights Bell Ringers Choir in a concert in the church.

* Chemainus-Ladysmith (#769), a note by Don Morton. A gathering of 60 members, wives and visitors on May 24th enjoyed a highly successful Ladies Night, which began with a Chinese dinner and concluded with a talk by public health nurse Mary Allan on her recent trip to the orient. 10 were present from Duncan, 14 from Gordon, the latter bringing the travelling gavel. Donations made to Moorecroft Camp Fund (\$500), C.G.I.T., Boy Scouts, Second Mile Fund, and the Bible Society.

* Brechin U.C., Nanaimo (#048), notes by Don Morton. 60 members and wives attended the Ladies Night on April 8th (including 10 from Duncan!) to enjoy an evening of fun plus a talk by Presbytery Officer Rev. Les Clark on ecumenical relations and dialogue with native peoples. The club raised funds by way of a flea market in April (\$157), a plant sale on May 3rd (\$139), a pancake lunch on May 11th (\$50), this supporting donations of \$100 to the Island Scouts Building Fund and \$5 per members to the Second Mile Fund (this bringing to nine the number of Vancouver Island clubs that have gone this "second mile" for AOTS).

* Langley U.C., Langley (#397), an annual report from secretary Ron Pardoe. An active group, that has a program of regular monthly meetings, sends members to the B.C. Round-Up, Banff Men's Conference, and Coastal Men's Conference, raises money by an annual fall auction and nut sales, and supports by donations the work of the Sunday School, cubs and scouts, the Alano Club (connected with AA), and sponsors two children through the Christian Children's Fund.

ALBERTA Conference, 1 club reporting.

* St. James U.C., Edmonton (#458), a letter report from secretary George Robertson. Their Ladies Night on March 27th drew 78 people, including visitors from St. Andrew's, Westminster, Central, and McClure United Churches, plus some Anglican and Baptist friends, to hear guest speaker Rev. Gordon Hunter of Thornhill, Ontario. [Some of you may remember Gordon Hunter as theme speaker at the First Biennial Convention of the National Association held at Canadian Keswick in September of 1959.] Other interesting meeting talks were "Denominations and Sects" by Rev. DeMoor, Third Christian Reformed Church, and "Visit to Moscow" by member Tom Scott.

SASKATCHEWAN Conference, 1 club reporting.

St. Andrew's U.C., Moose Jaw (#158), newsletters ("The Menu") for April, May, and June. Several AOTS work crews active around the church: changing some of the gymnasium equipment, improvements to floor and cupboards in the cold room, etc., and Saturday work parties at Camp Capernaum during June. Planning to send 10 men to the October Banff Men's Conference.

MANITOBA Conference, 1 club reporting.

Knox U.C., Winnipeg (#195), press clippings courtesy Clare Bailey. The April meeting (the last until October) featured an interesting talk on the International Model Railroad Club (600 members in 17 clubs in Canada alone) by member Jack Kerr. He demonstrated an engine and tender that he had built (over 3 years) weighing 175 lb. and able to haul up to 10 adults on a miniature track.

BAY OF QUINTE Conference, 3 clubs reporting.

George Street U.C., Peterborough (#390), the April, May, and June issues of Harambee, their monthly newsletter. The current fund-raising project is the collection and sale of waste newspaper, which at \$65/ton is becoming quite profitable. As of June collections totalled 4 tons. The club is also exploring the possibility of an AOTS service program for the elderly in the community. No doubt there are many occasions when such people are put to considerable expense because they lack the tools or skills to handle relatively simple jobs.

* Grace-St. James U.C., Peterborough (#267), a letter from sec.-treas. Warren Morrison recapping events since the first of the year. Their major source of funds is the sale of Christmas trees which last time raised \$1300, enabling them to donate \$1500 to the church for installation of a new heating system. Sunday breakfast meetings seem to be the norm and in March they had as invited guests members of the neighbouring Northminster U.C. congregation, swelling attendance to more than 80. Speakers have included local members of the municipal and provincial governments. [We understand that some members are from near-by Grace U.C.; hence the compound name.]

* St. Paul's U.C., Stirling (#235), newsletters for May and June, Harold Hagerman editor. Highlight was the May meeting and a talk by local school principal George Patton on "The Life Wheel", based on Luke 2:52, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man". The club organized painting work parties at Camp Quin-Mo-Lac in May, held a steak barbecue on June 4th, and had their annual Auction Sale and Strawberry Social on June 25th. Five members attended the Ontario Round-Up in April.

LONDON Conference, 2 clubs reporting.

Victoria Avenue U.C., Chatham (#188), their uninhibited and sometimes illiterate newsletter for April, May, and June. Some highlights: conducted a sunrise service April 6th; Ladies Night, March 28th, a "smashing success"; mustered a big (and likely boisterous) delegation for Thamesville's charter night April 18th; sent the usual large contingent to the Ontario Round-Up (several times they have won the attendance banner); on behalf of his "nutty buddies" and himself as "chief nut", Roger Kettle reports sales in excess of \$3000 in the annual "comfortable chew"; planning a fall retreat at the Bluewater Conference Centre. Coming up: 25th anniversary celebration, November 15 and 16/80, with Dr. Bob McClure as their special guest (Bob will have his hands full with those guys as patients!).

Thamesview U.C., Fullarton (#114), several press clippings courtesy of Clare Boyd. On March 26th a "rural urban night", an evening of variety entertainment plus a talk by trade unionist-employer-clergyman Rev. Harry McWilliams on some life experiences; a day-long field trip by bus to Goderich: to the Huron County Pioneer Museum in the morning, and to the plant of Champion Grader, manufacturer of road-building equipment, in the afternoon; and finally a wind-up meeting on May 27th at member Harris Butson's summer cottage near Bayfield. Their minister, Maurice Francis, is leaving soon to exchange pulpits with Rev. John Anderson of New Zealand.

TORONTO Conference, 1 club reporting.

Bellefair U.C., Toronto (#558), newsletters for April and May by president Harry Wolfram. For the meeting of April 14th members went on a tour of Griffith Laboratories, producers of spices and related food products in Toronto, and on May 12th they heard a talk by Glen Tompkins, newly appointed Director of Special Projects at U.C. headquarters. Also: a Mother's Day breakfast May 11th, and a barbecue with the wives on June 21st. A joint meeting with the AOTS men of Wilmar Heights U.C. is planned for October 5th. Six members attended the Ontario Round-Up in April.

NEWFOUNDLAND Conference, 1 club reporting.

* St. Paul's U.C., Deer Lake (#778), a letter from secretary Malcolm Fudge. Two events of note: on May 13th the club hosted a joint meeting with clubs from Springdale (Grace U.C.), La Scie (Zion U.C.), and Stephenville (First U.C.) in which, following an AOTS-made roast beef dinner, the new Humber Presbytery District Council (see April/80 Newsletter, page 10) was formally set up (the St. Anthony club is also a member of this Council but they were unable to attend this meeting). And on Sunday, June 8th, a father-and-son breakfast meeting followed by the 11 AM service conducted by club members.

Which again brings us to the end of the news. Some may wonder why the detail. Very simply, to let you know something of the great variety of activities that make up the fellowship and service of AOTS. It all matters; it all meets a need, whatever or however small the project or service or donation may be. If it didn't exist there would be notable gaps and we would all be poorer. So be encouraged by what others are doing, and continue to tell us what you are doing. Next deadline: not later than October 24th in your favourite mail box, addressed to: The Executive Secretary, G. Allan Smith, #602 70 Baif Blvd., Richmond Hill, Ontario. L4C 5L2. Better still, send your material as events happen and are fresh in your mind, and let us know what you consider to be important.

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DISTRICT COUNCIL/CONFERENCE NEWS

First and foremost is the good news that, as noted above, the proposed new district council for west Newfoundland (see April/80 Newsletter, page 10) formally came into existence as the Humber Presbytery District Council, at a meeting in Deer Lake on May 13th.

Vancouver Island District Council

This very active council has reported on their quarterly meetings of April 18th and July 18th, hosted by the Duncan and Brechin clubs, respectively. Attendance at the former was 62 and at the latter 37. In each case 8 of the 9 Island clubs were represented.

At the April meeting members received encouraging reports on behalf of three of four prospective new men's clubs on the Island, heard a report on the Travelling Gavel (responsible for the high level of interclub visitation in this area), and voted a \$100 donation to the George Pringle Memorial Camp, site of the annual Island rally held on May 25th (see page 12). President Ernie Stafford then extended a special welcome to an unexpected guest in the person of our national president, Dr. Murray McPherson of Winnipeg. In his talk to the meeting Murray commended the council members for the very effective work they were doing on the Island. He recalled some of the early history of AOTS, then described the current situation and the steady encouraging growth the movement is now experiencing. He invited questions and got them on a wide range of topics, covering finances, national publicity, chartering new clubs, national projects, and many others.

Although the main purpose of Murray's trip west was to attend this council meeting he also visited the Chemainus-Ladysmith club on the 19th. During his stay on the Island he was a guest of Norman and Mrs. Carter (Norman is B.C. Conference AOTS president).

Regina District Council

This council appears to meet monthly. In the report of the meeting of April 1st, 8 men present, there is mention of the Judge Harold Thompson Scholarship Fund, a council project that provides \$200 per year to each student candidate for the ministry in the Regina area. President Alex Hay reports that there are currently 3 or 4 students receiving this aid, that in the past the number has ranged from as few as 2 to as many as 5. The Fund is supported by club donations. He has agreed to give us a story on this at a later date. Other

business included arrangements for the annual clean-up etc. at Lumsden Beach United Church Camp, May 3rd, 8 clubs and churches sharing in this, and the annual planting of flowers at Mutchmore Lodge and Hewitt Place on May 21st. The latter are senior citizen housing units; on Sundays AOTS men take the residents to and from church.

Other district and conference news includes encouraging signs of AOTS growth. Thus, in addition to that reported above by the Vancouver Island council, Montreal and Ottawa Conference AOTS president John Polley says that two new clubs are expected in his area, and western vice-president Jim Dickie reports interest at two places in B.C. and Alberta. Ross Agar, reporting for London Conference, says that a London club has voted to reaffiliate. According to Alan Staig, our man at United Church House, church records show a 20% growth in AOTS numbers for 1979 over 1978 (better than the inflation rate!). All of which is very encouraging.

Further on new clubs (see April/80 Newsletter, page 10), the charter presentation at Zion U.C., La Scie, Nfld., was held on April 28th, described by Cyril Locke, Conference AOTS president, as "a gala affair and well attended", with 10 men present from the sponsoring Springdale club. And the Topsail club received its charter on May 26th. Turning to London Conference, the charter presentations were held as scheduled for the Tilbury-Quinn and Kent North clubs on April 11th and 18th, respectively. Following reactivation of the club of First U.C., Salmon Arm, B.C., Al Smith advises that he has now received their application for a charter.

A very important item of news has to do with the Second Mile Fund. As reported previously (see February/80 Newsletter, page 10), the Chemainus-Ladysmith club took the unusual step of voting a \$5 per member donation to the Fund, matching the per-member annual dues to the national body. This action has now spread to include all 9 of the Vancouver Island clubs. B.C. Conference AOTS president Norm Carter is optimistic that it will spread even further, to the point that AOTS can become independent of financial support from the Division of Mission. Remember, the purpose of the Fund is "second mile" support for AOTS, free-will support that goes beyond our dues obligation.

If you would like to participate, either as a club or as an individual, send your donation to the national treasurer: Mr. Robert Lewis, 1286 Landfair Crescent, Oakville, Ontario, L6H 2N3. You will receive a receipt for income tax purposes. Pledges for this year total 40 for \$3035, to June 30th, well ahead of the 25 for \$1356 at this time in 1979.

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"BACK TO BASICS"

This was the theme of the 11th Biennial Convention of the National Association held in Toronto, July 27-29, 1979. The Report of Proceedings is now out and copies have been sent to all delegates, clubs, and individual members. If you were there you can refresh your memory of the talks or reports you found of most interest. If not so fortunate as to have attended you may contact your club secretary to borrow the report and read about what went on. There were outstanding messages from keynote speaker Rev. Maurice Boyd ("My Gospel"), Don Smith ("What Kind of Service?"), the banquet address by Rev. Bob Rumball, and the Sunday morning sermon by Rev. Ted Kersey.

In introducing Maurice Boyd of Metropolitan U.C., London, in reference to problems and opportunities in life, Dr. Jim Guest, also of London, Ontario, told the following amusing story: A young man attending a convention in a hotel came down to the desk and told the clerk that he had a problem. The clerk said: "My good man, there are no problems, just opportunities". The young man replied: "Call it what you will but there is a girl in my room".

Some interesting reading awaits you.

MEMO, from the desk of Alan Staig

WORDS, WORDS, WORDS!

I'm so sick of words.
I get words all day through,
First from him, now from you;
Is that all you people can do?

Eliza Doolittle in "My Fair Lady" expresses very clearly what so many of us feel as we drown in a torrent of words, spoken and written. The same basic cry comes from the Bible:

"Everyone who hears these words of mine and obeys them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock ...". (Mat. 7:24)

One of the distinctive features of humans is their supposed ability to communicate clearly and unambiguously with each other. How poorly we do it, and how often we shelter behind words as an alternative to action. Are we to "look before we leap" or believe that "he who hesitates is lost"? How thoroughly are we to do our research before we go into action?

By the time you read this, the 28th General Council of the United Church will have run its course in Halifax. More than half a million words will have been poured out to identify concerns and to call for action by the Church in the pursuit of the ministry of Jesus Christ. It is up to all of us to follow up those words with action.

As each of us -- as individuals and as members of AOTS -- makes plans for the months ahead, we are forced into a compromise between two extremes. At one end of the scale we can visualize participating in events that are socially fun and rewarding, that perhaps will teach us something, deepen our faith in some way, build on our traditions and foster Christian fellowship. On the other extreme we see a scene of social action, engaged to the full limit of our capabilities in righting some specific wrong at a local, regional, national or even international level. Maybe we are challenged to provide a service or facility that is needed and not yet available.

As you prepare for your work of "serving" in the year ahead, may I suggest you include in your preparation a study of that word "serve", especially as we find it recorded in the Gospels. Your strategy will end up somewhere between the two extremes -- all talk or all action -- and will include much talk and much action.

I wish I could be with every one of you -- and with every club -- to share in your talk and action. Canada is too big a land for that to be possible. But please remember that I too am among you "As One That Serves".

[Alan Staig is Associate Secretary, Ministry With Adults, Division of Mission in Canada.]

Archivist Bill Hastings, writing from the dim and musty recesses of the archives, sounds as if he needs cheering up a bit. "It gets kind of lonely here", he says, "and my appeals for material -- old Bridge Builders, round-up programs, pictures, etc. -- for the most part have not been answered" (though he says two President's Letters came recently from the Kent Essex area). He asks us to identify as many faces as possible in any pictures we send. However, he has some good news: the United Church Archivist at the University of B.C. has now set aside a place for our material, and filing has commenced, very appropriately, with acquisitions from Ryerson U.C., where in 1923 the first AOTS club was formed.

Looking back at a May 1957 President's Letter by Dave Sherwood, he notes that some things change and some don't. Thus Phil Spence, then executive secretary, says "we have been issuing charters at the rate of one a week" (certainly a change!), and then "as of April 1st almost half of the clubs still haven't let me know who their officers are" (no change?). He also notes an item in The Handshake of May 1945 (then the official publication of the Central Council of AOTS Clubs) reporting that \$5000 was raised for the promotion of boys' work in B.C. Says Bill, "not bad for 1945 times and dollars". In addition to printed material, he invites us to drop him a line if we have any particular memories we would like to leave with him. His address: W. G. Hastings, 803 Younette Dr., Vancouver, B.C. V7T 1T1.

A Message from the President, Murray McPherson

A year has passed since we met in Toronto for the 11th Biennial Convention, and I believe it is appropriate at this time for each of us to assess the achievements of the period and to update our plans in light of the resolve of that gathering. For me it has been a time of expanded service in the men's club program across the church and I am most appreciative of the opportunities provided me as your president. I am also most grateful to the many club members and their families whose hospitality has made my visits so enjoyable. In full awareness of the challenges and responsibilities of the office, I ask from each of you your prayerful and active support during the coming year.

To refresh our memories of things past I would urge that each club devote at least one meeting in the near future to a review of the record of proceedings of the Convention, with special emphasis on study and discussion of the material contained in the minutes -- particularly the inspired addresses we received from Maurice Boyd and Ted Kersey -- and with careful consideration of the workshop reports which are included. I would also suggest that each club rethink their purposes, programs, and outreach in light of this document.

In looking to the future may I remind each of you that we have agreed to meet in Calgary in August 1981. The convention, with "In His Service To Care and To Share" as the theme, is being planned by a committee representing the west. I urge each club to give consideration to this theme as it may apply to their activities for the coming year. We must truly demonstrate at the local, national, and international levels that we both care and are willing to share.

Let us move forward together.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

President Murray McPherson has the following announcement to make re the position of executive secretary of the National Association:

" With deep regret I must report that Mr. Allan Smith has tendered his resignation as national secretary of AOTS effective December 31st. As we know, Al has served the Association in excellent fashion over these last three years. For personal reasons he feels he must give up the secretarial duties. As Al put it -- 'Due to my personal situation I am unable to do justice to the job of executive secretary ... It is not an easy decision to make but I believe it to be a necessary one'.

On behalf of the National Association I extend our heartfelt thanks to Al for his dedicated and loyal service to the AOTS movement. Our prayers and thoughts are with Al and Vi at this time.

With this change in staff pending, I urge each club and individual member to give serious consideration to the question of a replacement. We should keep in mind that the national office could be located anywhere across the country, therefore we would appreciate hearing of qualified persons who might be interested in serving in this way."

Harry Colnett Memorial Fund

As you know, this fund was established following the 9th Biennial Convention in Ottawa, in 1975, to provide an annual \$500 scholarship in support of a student in agriculture preparing for service related to food production in a developing country. Murray McPherson advises that the names of two current winners will be announced shortly (there will be a second scholarship this year because an award was not made in 1979). Murray also reports that Douglas Tanner, 1978 winner, and his wife have just been accepted by the Division of World Outreach as agricultural missionaries for service commencing in early 1981. They expect to receive their assignment following the Halifax meeting of General Council.

23rd Annual Vancouver Island AOTS Rally

This annual one-day event was held on Sunday, May 25th, from 2 to 7 PM, at George Pringle Memorial Camp on Shawnigan Lake. All nine of the Island clubs were represented, Duncan winning the attendance shield. In the absence of president Ernie Stafford the affair was co-ordinated by 1st vice-president John Dexter of the Gordon club. All clubs shared in the arrangements, which included an afternoon picnic and evening service of worship.

Guest speaker in the open-air service was Rev. Ron Attwell of Mill Bay. He was assisted by Rev. Harold Boyd of Brechin U.C., Nanaimo, and an impromptu 35-man choir led by Wilson Billingsley at the organ. Mr. Attwell spoke on the calling of ordinary men of different vocations to be disciples, using St. Luke's account of the calling of Matthew as the example, an address to stimulate the spirit of service in the church-oriented men's clubs.

In the afternoon events, a horseshoe pitching tournament was won by the Fairfield club, Gordon and Chemainus-Ladysmith taking second and third places. Some of the hardier types played softball and went swimming. Net proceeds of \$110 were donated to the Camp.

B.C. AOTS Round-Up

This annual one-day rally was held at South Burnaby U.C. on March 29th. The registration was 64, made up of 30 from the Island and 34 from the mainland, representing 9 and 10 clubs, respectively. B.C. Conference AOTS president Norman Carter was general chairman.

Theme speaker was Charlie Burrirt of South Burnaby and first president of the National Association (1959-61). His subject was communication with God, in which he stressed fellowship and motivation, and noted that all are ministers though not all are clergy. In ministry, he said, we are partners with God and as a minority we are the salt of the community. He was assisted by Bill Anderson and Bob Bagshaw through their music. Following Charlie's talk morning and afternoon the meeting broke up into small discussion groups to consider the thoughts he had presented. The closing event was an evening banquet (ending at 6 PM to catch ferries), with western vice-president Jim Dickie as guest speaker.

There were business sessions morning and afternoon. Attendance awards were won by South Burnaby (best total) and Langley (best percentage turnout). Duncan will be hosts in 1981.

Manitoba AOTS Round-Up

In a recent report Clare Bailey, Conference AOTS president, says that an excellent round-up was held at Silver Heights U.C., Winnipeg, in the evening of April 28th, with 102 men present. Ernie Orpin was chairman. Singing was led by Bob Publow with Major Milley of the Salvation Army at the piano. Guest speaker was Rev. Bruce Roberts, Knox U.C.

1980 Ontario AOTS Round-Up, April 25-27

AOTS men of Ontario again met at the YMCA Conference Centre, Geneva Park, Orillia, for this annual spring rally. The theme was "Men's Mid-Life Crises -- Impasse or Opportunity". It was presented by a panel of four: Rev. Bill Major, director of the Pastoral Institute of Northern Ontario (for the crises of the 30's), Rev. Doug Joblin, professor of religious studies, Huntington College, Sudbury (for those of the 40's), Rev. Brian Aitken, also professor of religious studies at Huntington College (for the 50's), and Rev. Norman MacKenzie, minister of the U.C. in Levack (the 60's). The theme had to do with problems we face at successive stages in life, such as: in the 30's - feelings of disillusionment with our god of the 20's; in the 40's - a feeling of being squeezed for time and some doubt about our worth and ability to cope; in the 50's - work becomes less meaningful, a sense of resignation increases; and in the 60's - a feeling of being shunted to the sidelines. Of course,

not everyone experiences this pattern in life, but studies indicate that it holds for the average person. The question: what should the church be doing about this.

The outcome of group discussions on the theme was the following statement:

As a result of our considerations of the life cycle, we resolve that the church should:

- encourage the interfacing of generations,
- encourage the participation of both laity and clergy in the caring and counselling work of the church,
- help prepare and educate people to face creatively each stage of the life cycle;

and we offer the following specific suggestions:

- encourage the development of family and marriage enrichment programs,
- encourage the input of youth in the total work of the church,
- help people to develop a healthy balance between work, family, community, and church,
- help people prepare for and adapt to creative retirement.

The panelists had prepared a 5-page outline on the theme which included some entertaining bits of philisophy from the Peanuts comic strip by Charles Schulz, such as:

Lucy: Look at it this way, Charlie Brown... These are your bitter days...

These are your days of hardship and struggle... But if you'll just hold your head up high, and keep on fighting, some day you'll TRIUMPH!

Charlie: Gee, do you really think so, Lucy?

Lucy: Frankly, no!

Round-up hosts were the clubs of Manitou Conference under Ned Brownlee as chairman. Attendance was 173, the South Raleigh club with a delegation of 15 winning the attendance banner. Sid Bagnall and pianist Dave Penny provided the leadership in song. The offering received at the Sunday morning communion service, \$556, was donated to the Harry Colnett Memorial Fund. The dates in 1981: April 10-12 (2 weeks earlier), with Toronto Conference as hosts.

Perhaps the one person best remembered by those who have attended recent Ontario round-ups is Stan MacBeth. Stan is remembered for his music, both on the accordion and at the piano, during daytime sessions and following the 10 PM snack when a large group gathers at the piano to sing while he plays anything asked of him. This year, for example, he gave us a 45-minute recital which included a number of classical and semi-classical favourites. Without doubt, Stan is an accomplished musician (he also plays the organ), and he freely brings this talent to these AOTS meetings.

Such a talent is remarkable. More so in Stan's case because he cannot read a note of music. In fact, Stan has had no formal musical training; everything he knows has been acquired by listening to radio and recorded music and by experimentation on the instruments he plays so well. For, you see -- Stan is blind, and has been for all of his 72 years. Being blind means that he cannot see the response of his audience. But he can certainly sense it, and when applauded with a standing ovation his face lights up with just the biggest smile you could ever hope to see. Such moments have to be among the most touching of the round-up weekends. I don't think anyone forgets them.

Stan was born in Uxbridge, attended the Ontario School for the Blind in Brantford, and now lives in Toronto, where he is a member of the Kingston Road U.C. AOTS Men's Club. He plays for their meetings and the club contributed to the purchase of his present accordion.

Listening to Stan brings to mind the words of Paul (Romans 8:39), that nothing can separate us from the love of God; no obstacle is so great that we cannot make an important contribution to the lives of others. Stan MacBeth is a fine example of this great truth.

12th NATIONAL CONVENTION

United Church AOTS Men's Clubs University of Calgary August 21 - 23rd, 1981

The WAGON WHEELS are rolling!
From Newfoundland and Victoria, you're invited to join the wagon train, blaze a trail to Calgary, and open up new "frontiers" and "frontiers" for AOTS Men's Clubs.

The 12th National Convention will be held on August 21-22-23 on the University of Calgary campus, nestled in the wheat fields at the base of the Canadian Rockies!

"We have adopted the theme --IN HIS SERVICE TO CARE AND SHARE-- to capture the essence of AOTS and to reflect society's priorities for the 1980s," says Convention Chairman Fred Holberton.

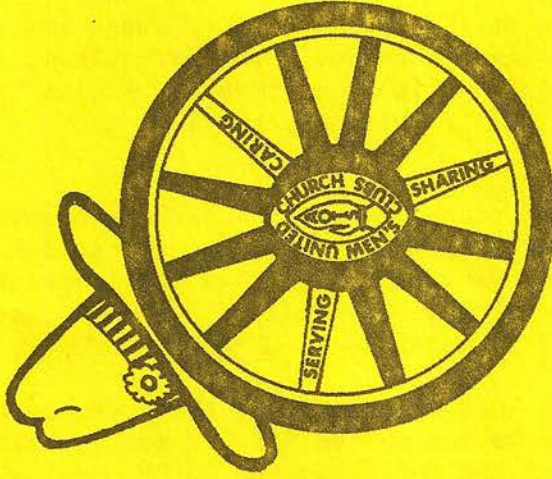
"The convention committee is already planning the swing of things, planning the traditional Calgary White Hat "horsepitality" famous across the country. Full details and registration forms will be available in the next AOTS Newsletter. We encourage all Clubs and members-at-large to start planning their 1980 holiday schedule around the August convention," said Chairman Fred.

AOTS members wanting to be sure of receiving their registration direct from the convention committee should drop a note to Convention Registrar Steve Megley, at 10707 Maplecreek Drive SE., Calgary, postal code T2J 1V4

The organizing committee for the 12th National AOTS Convention has unveiled its conference logo.

The White Hat and wagon wheel provide the western flavour with the conference theme In His Service to Care and Share. The AOTS insignia at the hub of the wheel reflects the role of AOTS Men's Clubs in meeting the challenges of serving, caring and sharing.

Watch for this Logo!!
Future mailings will bring you full details of the August 21-22-23 Convention at the University of Calgary!



"In His Service to Care and Share."