

The Handshake



The Voice of the National Association of United Church AOTS Men's Clubs



Here is a picture of your President rowing from coast to coast to visit local AOTS clubs!

Many of your council attended the annual meeting hosted by Gaetz Memorial United Church AOTS in Red Deer, Alberta on September 12th to 14th.

The weekend started with a regular monthly

meeting of the local club following a pot luck supper on Friday. The business meeting was held on Saturday and we attended the church service on Sunday morning before returning home.

Council members from Victoria BC to Newfoundland came to discuss a report prepared by President Elect Jim McKibbin and your Vice Presidents on what your organization might look like in 5 or 10 years. A copy is included in this issue. Please read and share your thoughts with us.

Our organization operates with a National Council consisting of Officers, committee chairmen and Conference representatives. We rely on each to fulfill their responsibilities in service for the ministry of men. Our past president, Garnet Thompson, is looking for men to take positions on your council. Our National Biennial Convention will be combined with Central Canada Spring Roundup. Plan to attend.

Look for greetings from our Moderator, David Giuliano and Nora Sanders, Secretary, General Council United Church of Canada elsewhere in this publication.

There is also information on Life Memberships. We are looking for applications for the "President's Man" award to be presented at the Biennial National AOTS Convention in 2009. The sponsoring club should provide a letter detailing the member's achievements.

3 things in life – once gone, never to come back: Time / Words / Opportunity

3 things in life – one should have: Hope / Peace / Honesty

3 things in life – most valuable: Love / Friends / Self-confidence

3 things in life – that are never certain: Success / Dreams / Fortune

3 things in life – that make a good person: Sincerity / Hard work / Compassion

3 things in life – that can destroy a person: Pride / Greed / Anger

3 things in life – that remain truly constant: God, the Father / God, the Son / God, the Holy Spirit

Keep up the good work!

Blessings, **Bill Love**



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In remembrance of those who have or are serving our country so bravely.

AOTS, "As One That Serves", is a church-related organization of men initiated in 1923 and dedicated to promoting Christian fellowship and deepening the spiritual life of men and developing effective programs of Christian service.

The Handshake © is published by the National Association of United Church AOTS Men's Clubs which was established January 8th, 1923, at Kerrisdale Methodist Church, now known as Ryerson United Church, Vancouver, British Columbia.

The Handshake contains news and announcements of the AOTS Men's Clubs and other men's ministry groups as submitted. It is provided to AOTS members twice yearly, by the national AOTS office. The views and comments which are published in the Handshake are not necessarily those of the National AOTS Association.

Photo submissions: If you want your original photo returned, please enclose a stamped, self addressed envelope with your submission.

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*** Executive Members**

Honorary President	Ernie Orpin
*Past President	Garnet Thompson
*President	Bill Love
*President Elect	Jim McKibbin
*Western Vice President	Harvey Douglas
*Central Vice President	David Morris
*Eastern Vice President	Gary Ross
*Treasurer	Marvin Bidfell
*Recording Secretary	Jim Upright
*National Secretary	Wallace Macdonald
Church & Community Fellowship & Membership	Jim Lawrence
Finance	Al Anthony
Spiritual Life & Leadership	Robert Lewis
Constitution & Bylaws	George Bishop
Promotions	Howard Wills
Archivist	Tony Hodge
Communications	Harry Wolfram
Regeneration	Stephen Finch
Handshake Editor	George Bishop
Members at large	Harold Lorenz
	Ken Lane, Ernie Paddock
	Keith Elliott, Doug Carter

The AOTS web page can be found at <<www.aots.ca>>
 Webmaster address: <<mark@aots.ca>>

The deadline for submissions to the next edition of the **PRINTED Handshake** is **March 1, 2009**

Great News from Holy Trinity in Elliot Lake
 Holy Trinity will charter **TWO new AOTS Clubs** in the near future!!
 St. Andrews United Church AOTS Men's Club and St. Stephen's United Church AOTS Men's Club, both situated in Sudbury. More information on the chartering of these two new clubs will appear in the next issue of the Handshake. **Ken Lane**

Another new "handshake"

National President Bill Love welcomed keynote speaker Alanna Mitchell to the Toronto Conference Fall Rally held on November 1, 2008. See page 7 for a full report on this Rally.



Alanna Mitchell is the author of "Dancing at the

Dead Sea" which tracks the world's environmental hotspots. An acclaimed journalist for both the *Globe and Mail* and the *Financial Post*. She has won Reuters Foundation Awards for environmental reporting on three occasions. Her upcoming book "Sea Sick" is due to be published in Canada in January of 2009.

Bill Love has recently retired from General Insurance. He was transferred to Calgary in 1962 from Toronto, is married to Evelda and has two sons, Kevin living in New York, and Michael who has taken over his father's brokerage files. Bill has held many of our National Council positions and is enjoying his time as the current National President.

Ladies Corner

And then the fight started.....

My wife sat down on the couch next to me and as I was flipping channels; she asked, "What's on TV?" I said, "dust".

And then the fight started!

When I got home last night, my wife demanded that I take her someplace expensive.... So, I took her to the gas station....

And then the fight started!

My wife and I were sitting at a table at my high school reunion, and I kept staring at a drunken lady swigging her drink as she sat alone at a nearby table. My wife asked, "Do you know her?" "Yes", I sighed, "she's my old girlfriend. I understand she took to drinking right after we split up many years ago, and I heard she hasn't been sober since". "My God!" says my wife, "who would think a person could go on celebrating that long?"

And then the fight started!



*Copy of a letter from the
Moderator
United Church of Canada*

September 12, 2008

National Association of United Church AOTS Men's Clubs,
c/o Bill Love, President,
Calgary, Alberta.

Dear Members of the AOTS Men's Club

I am happy to send greetings and to offer our congratulations to the members of the National Association of United Church Men's Clubs as you gather to celebrate 85 years of promoting Christian fellowship and the deepening of the spiritual life of men in the United Church.

On behalf of The United Church of Canada, I extend congratulations, gratitude and solidarity. Please accept my best wishes along with my hope that the years ahead will be rich with discovery, community and discipleship in the Spirit.

It was my pleasure to encounter some of you at the KAIROS event for young adults held at Five Oaks at the end of August. Your generosity in supporting their "Day of Sabbath" events was deeply moving and encouraging for these young adults. For 85 years you have been "As Ones That Serve" and continue to hold that vision among us.

Thank you for your faithful witness among us. I hope you have a wonderful celebration time together and I send you my best wishes and greetings from "our house to yours".

We are not alone! Thanks be to God!

Blessings and peace to you.

(Signed) David Giuiano

David Giuiano (The Right Reverend)
Moderator

*Copy of a letter from the
General Secretary, General Council
United Church of Canada*

September 12, 2008

National Association of United Church AOTS Men's Clubs,
c/o Bill Love, President,
Calgary, Alberta

Dear Members of the AOTS

Greetings to each of you who give leadership in our AOTS.

Congratulations as you celebrate 85 years of ministry and mission in The United Church of Canada.

Founded on the principle that clubs promote better community life and better citizenship by the practical application of teachings of Jesus, our AOTS has touched many men, congregations and communities across Canada over the past 85 years.

The AOTS through the years has supported Youth Groups, Church Camps, Hospitals and other community projects and provided fellowship and worship that inspired men to serve as Elders, Stewards, Sunday School Teachers and in our Presbytery and Conference courts and General Council. You have a rich history. Thanks be to God!

As you seek to discern the Spirit's call may you find strength from your past and confidence in God's leading in the future.

On behalf of the General Council Offices of The United Church of Canada, we celebrate with you this 85th Anniversary and offer our blessings and prayers.

Yours truly,

(signed) Nora Sanders

Nora Sanders
General Secretary, General Council

Thought for today...

Based on an excerpt from "A Present Help" by Robert A. Wallace

Avoiding compassion burnout.

"I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."
Matthew 25:40

How do I balance Christian concern for others with carrying on a life that is normal in my context? While I do give time, material gifts, and above all, emotional energy to concerns like these, how do I prevent being burned out by the limitless demands of a hungry, hurting world and by the demands of my church and my men's club which seems to have so much difficulty in finding new volunteers?

In a church newsletter, a minister wrote, "I notice in myself and others a kind of bedraggledness that seems to say, 'I would like to be concerned about global atrocities and all, but I don't have the energy. Commitment is hard work.'" He is right. Commitment is hard work, and the result of that kind of work can be burnout – compassion burnout.

Burnout is a technical term turned popular. Normal fatigue can be cured with rest since it is mainly a physical state. Burnout is more complex, not just stress, but a form of emotional exhaustion that includes disenchantment, disillusionment, and sometimes anger. It comes from wearing oneself out in excessive striving towards unrealistic goals.

Many are feeling it today in connection with disturbing scenes in Africa and even in committees and clubs in our churches and organizations in our communities. Hopes have failed and ideals have died. Yet we feel compelled to care. What can we do? **We can do six things:**

- 1. We can get some perspective on our self-importance. Each person is important in God's plan, but no one person is all-important. We are expected to give God's causes the use of our bodies but we are not to mistake ourselves for messiahs. We must learn to laugh at our own self-importance without putting ourselves down.*
- 2. We can get some perspective on our "cause". Burnout is often linked with disappointment and disillusionment. Every good action is open to abuse. Christians, who operate with recognition of the presence of Original Sin, may be less likely to be alarmed by the fact that not everyone assisted or assisting is an admirable person.*
- 3. We can test our own motives. Only when we act for others because we recognize them as children of God and recognize that we are called by God to act on their behalf, only then are we likely to persevere. Service is not an obligation for a Christian; it is a calling. We are called to serve. Disillusionment comes when we expect gratitude. As Christians we ask only the assurance that this is God's will.*
- 4. We can nurture a vision of the Kingdom of God. Paul advised, "Keep the vision given to you on the mountain." We can saturate ourselves in Christ's own vision. It might seem that we are back at the place where we are promoting burnout by holding up too high an ideal, but note that this is not the starting place.*
- 5. We can choose specific, limited areas in which to act. As Christians we will often want to give our time and effort to a cause that is lesser known rather than to the high profile programs with strong public appeal.*
- 6. Finally, we can 'wait on the Lord.' Have you ever noticed that the famous lines from Isaiah, "They that wait upon the Lord..." seem to move backwards. The natural climax would move from walking to flying. Isaiah knew that real-life enthusiasm starts with flight and ends with weary walking, yet even the walker who waits on the Lord shall not faint.*

Let us pray – Confront us, O God,
With all the hidden prejudices and fears that deny and betray our prayers.
Remove from us all false sense of superiority
And teach us how to grow in unity and love with all your people everywhere. Amen.

George Bishop – *Spiritual Life and Leadership Chair*

National AOTS Council Annual Meeting

Gaetz United Church, Red Deer, Alberta – Saturday September 13, 2008

(Edited excerpts from the official minutes)

Forward Planning Report – chaired by Jim McKibbin, President Elect: Comments for discussion and/or approval at our National Convention 2009. Jim pointed out that the National Council will need to be open to change and or restructuring. Discussion items:

- A change of name may be needed to accommodate Coed groups like the host church in Red Deer.
- Coed groups could be recognized, with ladies as full members.
- Proposed notice of motion to the 2009 Biennial Convention for a name change from the National Association of United Church AOTS Men's Club to *National AOTS Association of the United Church of Canada*



National group outside Gaetz United Church

Spiritual Life & Leadership Report - The Web site is updated regularly and devotions posted. The Spiritual Life Handbook is no longer distributed in printed form. The devotions can be printed out by clubs from the AOTS Web site (<http://www.aots.ca/info.htm>)

Regeneration Committee Report – approval received to support KAIROS 2008 Project in the form of a \$7,500 donation. Means of improving communications to clubs and individual members is ongoing. AOTS support of camping in the Toronto Conference was identified and discussed.

Church & Community Service – Scholarship awarded to Ms. Bronwell Powell who is now working in Tanzania on a one year project.

National AOTS Structure – A Committee consisting of Bill Love (National President); Garnet Thompson (Past President); Wally Shoults (Alberta Conference) and Howard Wills (Chair of Constitution and By Laws) was struck for the purpose of reducing the number of members on the National Council by combining some responsibilities. See report on page 14.

Observer on Tape – A mass mailing to all previous subscribers has increased the numbers from about 150 to approximately 220.



Steaks & chicken to feed the hungry gang



2009 Biennial – By motion, that the 2009 Biennial Convention be incorporated with the Spring Central Canada Roundup at Jackson Point on Lake Simcoe, Ontario, on April 24-26, 2009 (Carried)

Publicity – Tony Hodge is asked to update Brochures, produce an AOTS Power Point presentation, and explore making a DVD on AOTS.

Nominations – New nominations are requested by Past President Garnet Thompson for the restructured Council. (see the nomination form on page 12)

*Gaetz Memorial United Church
Red Deer, Alberta
Host of the 2008 National Meeting.*

KAIROS 2008, National Conference and Spiritual Retreat held every three years for young adults aged 18-30 was held at Five Oaks United Church Education & Retreat Centre, near Paris, Ontario, August 24th to 29th 2008. Attendance was just over 80 young adults. Supporters in attendance include The Right Reverend David Giuliano, our current moderator and The Right Reverend Dr. Marion Best, a past moderator of the United Church of Canada.

National AOTS sponsored, with a donation of \$7500, the *Sabbath Day* events on Wednesday August 27. These events included *An Arts Experience at Elora, adventures on the Grand River, an introduction to the Francis Sandy Theological Centre, and A Bike Journey to Paris and Brantford.*

Four members of the AOTS National Council participated in *Sabbath Day* from early breakfast through evening dinner. Jim McKibbin, National AOTS President-elect opened the morning with a presentation on the work of AOTS and how the goals and objectives of this men's organization ties in with the overall goals of the United Church of Canada. He invited males of the KAIROS participants to consider individual membership in the AOTS.

After breakfast the group divided according to interests. **Jim McKibbin** went with the *arts experience* group which visited artists and galleries as well as the very picturesque Elora Gorge, a natural wonder. Marvin Bildfell, the National AOTS treasurer took the canoe *adventure on the Grand River*. George Bishop, the chair of the National AOTS regeneration committee and spiritual life committee, with a large group met with *Francis Sandy* staff and visited with people in a few First Nations communities. The London Conference representative on the AOTS National Council, **Paul Cooper**, rode the 50 kilometers with the bicycle tour group. Each of these experiences was meaningful in looking at aspects



Jim McKibbin, centre dark shirt

of nature and people who matter. They also provided opportunities for interchange between AOTS men and youth.



Paul Cooper . back row on the left

Bev Robinson of London Conference, who was in charge of organizing the event, thanked AOTS for the support for what was an excellent day, noting that the evaluations from the participants found the *Sabbath Day* experience very enjoyable and worthwhile. In a letter from Rev. David Giuliani his thanks to the AOTS was expressed for both financial and personal support, noting that this experience will long be remembered and shared by the participants in Kairos 2008.

Harrow/Malden, Ontario, AOTS Report

In February, at our Valentines dinner meeting, we were joined by our ladies. Two new members were inducted. At our March meeting another new member was inducted.

Our "Father & Son" banquet, with seventy-two in attendance, was held at Harrow United Church, with guest speaker Derek Davis of the "Good Samaritan".

During the spring months two new stoves were purchased for the church kitchen, and thanks to a new club member, funds were available to install a new floor and make other improvements. Two new freezer units were also purchased for future storage.

Summer was spent "pie making" and scheduling support for our annual fund raising "pie tent" at the Harrow Fair. With 850 made pies and 250 purchased pies, we realized a net profit of over ten thousand dollars.

At our September meeting we inducted another four new members and decided to continue with our Annual Christmas Cake sale.

Club donations totaling some \$2,300.00 were made over the summer months. Certainly a successful year.

Submitted by **Don Mannell**

100 + Attend Toronto Conference Fall Rally

A Celebration of Water: Gift of Life

More than 100 people participated in “*A Celebration of Water: Gift of Life*”, this year’s AOTS Fall Rally for the Toronto Conference. National President Bill Love attended and applauded the event before traveling off to the Bay of Quinte Rally later that afternoon. Youth at Beach United, the host congregation, were front and centre. They presented the entire first portion of the program. Their readings and their music leadership set a fine tone for the rest of the day.

Alanna Mitchell presented the keynote address. She is the author of *Dancing at the Dead Sea: Tracking the World's Environmental Hotspots*. An acclaimed journalist for both the *Globe and Mail* and the *Financial Post* she has won Reuters Foundations awards for environmental; reporting on three separate occasions. Her upcoming book “*Sea Sick*” is due to be published in Canada in January of 2009. Alanna presented a broad insightful overview of the challenges facing us and our principal water resource – the ocean.

Her presentation was followed by a panel discussion led by Barry Truscott a member of both Beach United and the “Company of Canadians”. Panelists included Natalia Crowe who focused on watershed-based planning, First Nations peoples and the necessity to raise awareness of how water permeates our urban lives.

Joe Kennedy was also part of the panel. She is the Poverty, Wealth and Ecological Justice Program coordinator of The United Church of Canada. She is one of the authors of the United Church’s research initiative entitled, “*Water: Life Before Profit*”. Joy had a T-Shirt to match. She presented a spirit-driven analysis of water issues internationally. A member of the World Council of Churches Climate Change Working Group, Joy is also a member of the Ecumenical Water Network.

Joanne McHenry presented an insightful overview of public sector issues and water: where we were, where are we today and where we need to be. She is a water resources engineer with experience in the analysis and design of water conveyance and retentions systems. She focused on the myriad uses of water (hydro-electric) as well as conservation challenges.



Subsequent to the panel, the assemblage adjourned to a delicious lunch and conversation session. Following lunch the conference returned to Beach United sanctuary for a fabulous performance by the “Dixie Demons” who performed a number of water-related jazz compositions - several of them their own. The entire group closed the Jazz Vespers service with a rousing rendition of Down by the Riverside.

*Submitted by Jim McKibbin ,
Toronto Conference AOTS President*

We Remember



I received this copy of “*A Celebration of His Life*” from Richard Deitriche, a very good friend of Ernie’s and could not think of a better tribute to a fellow AOTS member than to reproduce the bulletin in Ernie’s HANDSHAKE.

Harold



Donald Christopher Morton was featured in the Spring 2007 Handshake and again in the Fall 2007 issue. It was with great sadness that Ernie Stafford sent the obituary from their local newspaper “The Pictorial” to me. AOTS has lost a great leader and worker.

Donald Christopher Morton
October 13, 1906 – March 31, 2008

It is with great sadness that the AOTS men of Trinity United Church in Newmarket, Ontario, said goodbye to one of our very faithful workers and friend. Bill died in his sleep, September 1, 2008 in his 79th year. Bill worked on practically every project our club was involved in.

George William (Bill) Atkins
January 30, 1930 – September 1, 2008



It is with great regret that I inform the AOTS membership of the passing of Mary Reashore on June 1, 2008. Gil, her husband, is well known in AOTS circles and contributed devotional articles to the Handshake many times. Gil is coping as best he can and carrying on with his extensive church related work as well as picking up where Mary left off with her regular “Meals on Wheels” deliveries.

Harold

Message from President of the Bay of Quinte Conference

As I relinquish my position with Bay of Quinte, I can only say what a privilege it has been.

I have sat in on planning meetings for 2007 Biennial Convention and 2008 Central Canada Roundup at Jackson's Point. What a joy it has been to work with all the talent found in Bay of Quinte Conference. It is heart warming to sit back and watch events unfold exactly as planned during these functions. Thanks guys.

I now look forward with much anticipation to my next post – serving on the National Executive as the Membership & Fellowship Chair, as Richard Deitriche is unable to carry on. We will continue to keep you in our thoughts and prayers, Richard.

It is my hope to establish a registry of every club with names of all members. This I realize can be quite a challenge, although with help from all club executives it can be achieved.

I look forward to greeting many of you at our 2009 Biennial Convention to be held at Jackson's Point, Ontario, April 24th – 26th, 2009

What a joy to be “As One That Serves”. **Al Anthony**

Western Vice President reporting on Manitoba

It is common knowledge that the AOTS clubs in the west are getting fewer all the time. This is not common only to Manitoba; it seems the same in Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. It is for this reason that I ask all men who read this report to pray for the National Executive as they discuss and deliberate on what to do to encourage the formation of new clubs, the revitalization of clubs who have folded and the rejuvenation of the clubs still active. It is through the active participation of prayer groups and grassroots members that the wonderful Christian fellowship experience of being an AOTS member will again spread across this great land called Canada. Men, may I encourage you to step forward with your ideas. *Submitted by Harvey Douglas*

Minnedosa United Church AOTS, Manitoba

The Minnedosa group tried something different this summer. While the group doesn't meet for a supper meeting in July or August, they planned several activities that were new and different for them. The men started meeting on the third Saturday morning of each month for a breakfast coffee get together at a local coffee chop. This has been a fun experience and seems to be an idea that will continue. Ten or eleven men meet to socialize and experience the love of Christ in Christian fellowship.

There were also two new fund raising programs. The first one was in conjunction with the Minnedosa 125th reunion and home coming. The club sold ice cream cones on Main Street, near the church office. While the weather was not the best on some days the club realized a \$600 plus profit for the adventure. The second one was a “Corn Roast” with smokies and butter tarts. While this adventure was not as profitable, it was a learning experience for the fellows and lots of fun. At the present time it appears that these two ideas will be carried on in the future.

On September 3, 2008 eleven of the club members met at Elgin Hall's cabin to kick off the 2008/09 season with a barbeque.



Respectfully submitted by Harvey Douglas, for the Minnedosa AOTS club.



Congratulations to President Clarence Langdon and the men from Trinity United AOTS club in Botwood, Newfoundland, pictured above, as they celebrated their 50th Anniversary

Update from Newmarket, Ontario:

Newmarket’s ‘As One That Serves’ Men’s Club is percolating along its merry way, continuing with monthly meetings together with a collection of on going projects.

Last Spring, due to a steady growth in their number of campers, a Toronto Conference Camp – Camp Scugog near Port Perry, Ontario - asked our club if we would



Delivering the benches to the Camp

consider building an additional 12 benches to go along with 34 benches we made for them a few years back.

We didn’t mind at all and with the talent of a few and the labour of the many, this job was done. Finished products are shown on the lower left.

As Christmas approaches so do many activities for the club - serving hot dogs & hot chocolate as the Santa Claus parade passes by, preparing and serving a Hot Roast Beef lunch at our church bazaar, along with assisting with various other seasonal events that pop-up.

On Saturday November 1st, eight members of our club attended the Annual Toronto Conference Fall Rally, with National President Bill Love as a special guest, hosted this year at Beach United Church in Scarborough. The day was titled “A Celebration of Water: Gift of Life”, with Alanna Mitchell as the keynote speaker

Alanna’s presentation was first rate. We learned a lot about how our species is having a disastrous effect on our oceans - 80% of our carbon dioxide, phosphate, and other pollutants are having a phenomenal impact on these waters; the other 20% of our pollution continues to sacrifice the air we breath.

The event was stimulating and certainly thought provoking. A collection of venues concerning how we could help to work against this very, very crucial situation were shared, but as was mentioned by Ms. Mitchell, the project unfortunately remains an up-hill struggle.

Congratulations and thanks to the youth choir of Beach UC Youth, to the ‘Dixie Demons’ who concluded the day with the jazz-inspired service and to the Beach AOTS club for their work in creating this thoughtful and inspiring experience.

Submitted by **Jonathan Wardlaw**

Lessons Learned



At 5 I learned – I like my teacher because she cries when we sing “Silent Night”.

At 7 I learned – Our dog doesn’t want to eat my broccoli either.

At 47 I learned – that children and grandparents are natural allies.

At 51 learned – that you can tell a lot about a man by the way he handles these three things:

a rainy day, lost luggag, and tangled Christmas tree lights.

At 92 I learned – that I still have a lot to learn.

**NOMINATION FORM FOR A LIFE MEMBERSHIP
IN THE NATIONAL AOTS**

Nominating Club _____

Signing Officers (2 required)

1. _____
Name (Print) Signature Office held

2. _____
Name (Print) Signature Office held

Or nominating individuals (3 required)

1. _____
Name (Print) Signature AOTS Club

2. _____
Name (Print) Signature AOTS Club

3. _____
Name (Print) Signature AOTS Club

Note: 1. **Cheque for \$100 (One Hundred dollars)** made payable to NATIONAL AOTS must accompany this nomination.

2. Mail this form to: **National AOTS Office,
c/o Wally Macdonald,
2063 Water's Edge Drive,
Oakville, ON L6L 1A3**

3. Name of nominee as it is to appear on the plaque

Name (Please Print)

Mailing address (apt. #, street & number, P.O. Box, RR # etc.)

Postal Code (_____) Phone number

Something New!! AGAIN

Having a "New Handshake" in the title area with a short bio of each of the "hand owners" has been a mild success, volunteers are scarce, but let's try something new, anyway. I would like to start a section called "**From the Grassroots**". The articles/stories would be submitted from individual AOTS members, and others if they wish, telling about activities etc. on a personal level rather than as a club or group.

Some rules would have to apply – (a) 200 words or less would be a good target, with a **little** leeway, (b) articles must be submitted with a name, address, phone number, church or club affiliation and email address if possible, (c) photos would be welcome, (d) editing would be at the discretion of *The Handshake* editor.

Tell us about how you feel about things. There are a number of items that the National Executive discussed at their last meeting (name change of our organization/admitting ladies as full members in the AOTS/revisit "sexual orientation" that was discussed at the National in London Ontario a few years ago). We

should be able to stir up some "cold coals" and prove that we are alive. Note: *This article has 205 words.*

Greetings from Richard Paul Deitriche

After serving many years as Membership & Fellowship chair on the National Executive, I find it necessary to step down. I have had some heart troubles over the years which forced me to stop traveling to various events and Biennial Conventions. I had a heart operation in May in Sudbury, the heart Specialist Dr. Mecci advised me that I must give up my position, too much stress.

As I was waiting to be wheeled into the operating room, my sister asked me, "Are you ready to meet God?" My answer wasn't short, I said, "*If I come out a little burnt, you will know the devil has no room for me. If I come out with a smile on my face that will mean God has no vacancy for me.*"

It looks like you and my friends at Holy Trinity AOTS Elliot Lake will have to put up with me a little longer. Yes my friends, I have stepped aside and like I said in the last edition of *The Handshake* shall be like the milk horse out to pasture but not forgotten, I hope. Please give Al Anthony your support as he takes over the job as Membership & Fellowship Chairman

Thank you for your support and prayers over the years.

May you go with God and strive to be, **AS ONE THAT SERVES**

Richard

Atheist

There was a little old lady, who every morning, stepped onto her front porch, raised her arms to the sky, and shouted; "***Praise the Lord!***"

One day an atheist moved into the house next door.

He became irritated at the little old lady, so, every morning he'd step onto his front porch after her and yell; "***There is no Lord!***"

Time passed with the two of them carrying on this way every day.

One morning, in the middle of the winter, the little old lady stepped onto her porch and shouted; "***Praise the Lord! Please Lord; I have no food and am starving, please provide for me!***"

The next morning she stepped out onto her porch and there were two huge bags of groceries sitting there.

"***Praise the Lord!***" she cried out, "***He has provided groceries for me!***"

The atheist neighbour jumped out of the hedge and shouted: "***There is no Lord, I bought those groceries!***"

The little old lady threw her arms into the air and shouted: "***Praise the Lord! He has provided me with groceries and made the devil pay for them!***"

Thanks to Harvey Douglas for this one

NOMINATION FORM FOR AOTS NATIONAL COUNCIL 2008– 2009

(Please type or print all information)

Positions open for Nomination

Officers:

President-Elect
Western Vice-President
Central Vice-President
Eastern Vice-President
Treasurer
Recording Secretary
National Secretary

Committee Chairs:

Church & Community
Fellowship & Membership
Spiritual Life
Constitution & By-Laws
Communications, Publicity & Promotions
Finance & Planning
Archivist
Handshake Editor

Nominee:

Name _____ Address _____
City/Town _____ Prov. _____ Postal Code _____
Phone # (____) _____
Position _____

Nominators: (two required)

Name _____	Name _____
Address _____	Address _____
City/Town _____	City/Town _____
Postal Code _____	Postal Code _____
Club/Church _____	Club/Church _____
Signature _____	Signature _____

I accept the above Nomination and, if elected, will serve to the best of my ability.

Signature of Nominee: _____ Date _____

Notes: 1. Send form to **Garnet Thompson**
12 Karl Street
Belleville, ON K8N 1J9

- 2. Please include a short biography of Nominee
- 3. Please return by **March 1, 2009**
- 4. This form may be copied as required.
- 5. Use an additional sheet for comments

Who are we?

Here's a fun exercise to try with your club to think about who you are as an AOTS club. This could be useful as you consider ways to move forward with your club.

Divide the club into small groups and have each group write the answers to the following questions on a piece of paper. This will take from 15-20 minutes.

Imagine the club as a person:

- How old is this person?
- What does this person look like?
- What are this person's strengths?
- What are this person's weaknesses?
- What does this person like to do?
- What energizes this person? What are his passions, concerns?
- What saps this person of energy?
- How do others perceive this person?
- What gifts does this person have to offer?
- Is there anything this person needs to let go of to have a fuller life, to let this person use his gifts and act more freely from the power of God's spirit?
- Who would that affect?
- How does this person nurture himself spiritually?
- What biblical image or story describes your understanding of this person?
- If you could give this person one piece of advice, what would it be?
- What hymn reflects this person?
- What is this person's name?

Once finished have each group present the "person" they have created
Consider what this means about the character and nature of the club. In other words, "Who" is the club?

On a large sheet of paper, using different coloured markers, draw the person.

After the discussion, sing suggested hymns or parts thereof.



Tool Time

This small group program invites each participant to bring in a tool that reflects in some way his spirituality, journey within the church, understanding of Christianity, or understanding of God.

Use the small group process below and have each man speak for a few minutes.

If the group is large you may want to divide into two or three groups or do the program over a couple of weeks so that each participant has enough time to speak.

Small Group Process:

Opening: prayer, song

Check-in: anything you need to get off your chest before we begin so that you can stay focused on our time together?

Centering: use, for example, the CD of centering prayers available through the UCRD and move into a time of silence or

Tool time: Have each participant bring in a tool that reflects in some way his spirituality, his journey within the church, his understanding of God or his understanding of Christianity.

Check-out: go around the circle and have each man state what has been useful to help build a deeper understanding of his spirituality, his journey within the church, his understanding of God or his understanding of Christianity.

Closing: prayer, song, blessing



Restructuring Proposal for the National AOTS Executive

(These proposals are just that! PROPOSALS, to be discussed and voted on as part of the 2009 Biennial Convention)

- 1) **Honorary President's** duty is to install the new Council at the Biennial. Position retained but is not part of council.
- 2) **President** will oversee organization, is a member of all committees
- 3) **The Past President** will chair committees consisting of Constitution and By Laws, Nominating, and oversee Staff.
- 4) **The President-Elect** will be a member of Future Planning Committee and Chair of the Biennial Convention Committee. Also will liaison with Conference Representatives, and with Officers of the United Church of Canada.
- 5) **Regional Vice Presidents** to be granted Travel Budgets to encourage an annual visit to clubs to report on activities of The National Council.
- 6) **The National Treasurer** will chair the Finance Committee.
- 7) **National Secretary** (only paid position), duties unchanged.
- 8) **Recording Secretary** to keep minutes of teleconferences and annual meetings
- 9) **Standing Committee Chair** to be an active member of council and will chair or liaison with chairs of other Committees i.e. (a) Church and Community Service; (b) Fellowship and Membership; (c) Spiritual life and Leadership, (d) The Handshake Editor.

The National Council will be entitled to invite any Committee Chairs (and others who may have responsibilities for major events) to attend a National Executive Meeting.

With these changes the National Council will reduce to 10 voting members who are expected to participate in at least four teleconferences and one face-to-face meeting annually to handle the business of National AOTS. A Quorum will consist of 6 voting members.

The Annual Meeting of the National Council to be held in Toronto at the Head Office of the United Church of Canada.



Great News!!!!

Our webmaster has spent a lot of time and effort on our web site.

Check it out.....there are a lot of improvements already made and more to come very shortly.

You can avail yourself of monthly devotionals, read **THE HANDSHAKE** in full colour, and see a couple of videos about our National Hospital Project or get information about the "Observer on Tape" project. New items and updates are ongoing. Send the "link" to your friends.

Get information about our "Youth to Camp" project right on the same web site. Get active.....get informed ...get going.

"Click" on the link to Men's Ministries Network There is a lot to be learned through



www.aots.ca



Spiritual Life and Leadership Column



Christmas is good news
But if you ask me what it is,
I know not.
It is a track of feet in the snow.
It is a lantern showing a way.
It is a door set open.

G. K. Chesterton

The Wise Men journeyed following a star. Though we do not make a journey like this, movement is expected of us – movement of the spirit. St. Sarapion of Egypt, in the 4th century made a pilgrimage to Rome, a long and risky journey then. He was fascinated to hear of a saintly woman living a life of prayer and devotion, but never leaving her room. Skeptical about her way of life, for he felt travel was the best way to learn, he called on her. He was abrupt, “Why are you sitting here?” She replied, “I am not sitting, I am on a journey.” Spiritually we can always be on the move. We journey through the inward space of our hearts and our spirits.

Daily prayer is a mark of discipleship. This is the habit of living in relationship with God in Jesus of Nazareth. Prayer is a habit because it only comes naturally as we practice it. Though prayer is natural to the soul, we stutter and stumble in approaching the throne of God and in articulating our desires and needs, hopes and dreams. In prayer we rediscover and claim God’s love and promises for our lives. We live eternity in the here and now.

Then what about praying in public – we pray to share how God is active in our lives today. A prayer in its simplest form is talking with God. It is not the occasion to impress others with how religious we are or to show how much we know about the Bible. Prayer in its best form is an expression to God of our feelings, using the words that come to us at the time. (If you don’t feel comfortable praying spontaneously, write down your prayer beforehand and read it aloud.)

With this in mind – that the best prayer is a prayer from the heart – here are a few suggestions for praying out loud:

- ? Think of the occasion. Why have you gathered?
- ? Are there any special requests for those gathered? Is there an important observation or acknowledgment that should be made?
- ? Be honest with your feelings. Let your words reflect your joy, your sadness or your worry. At a loss for words? People can relate to that.
- ? Be thankful. On all occasions we can give thanks to God.
- ? Be brief. Keep your prayers short. Conservation of words will be appreciated.

Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart.
Luke 18:1

George Bishop – *Spiritual Life and Leadership Chair*



I received this from Jeremiah Day, who operates Woodland Printers & Native Art Gallery. Jeremiah is a member of the Serpent River First Nation in Cutler, Ontario, which is on Highway 17 outside of Elliot Lake, Ontario. **Woodland Printers prints the Handshake for the AOTS.**

Harold

An Australian Definition of a Canadian

In case anyone asks you “Who is a Canadian”?

You probably missed it in the local news, but there was a report that someone in Pakistan had advertised in a newspaper an offer of a reward to anyone who killed a Canadian - any Canadian.

An Australian dentist wrote the following editorial to help define what a Canadian is, so they would know one when they found one.

A Canadian can be English, or French, or Italian, Irish, German, Spanish, Polish, Russian or Greek. A Canadian can be Mexican, African, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Australian, Iranian, Asian, Arab, Pakistani or Afghan.

A Canadian may also be a Cree, Mohawk, Blackfoot, Sioux, or one of the many other tribes known as native Canadians. A Canadian's religious beliefs range from Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu or none. In fact, there are more Muslims in Canada than in Afghanistan. The key difference is that in Canada they are free to worship as each of them chooses. Whether they have a religion or no religion, each Canadian ultimately answers only to God, not to the government, or to armed thugs claiming to speak for the government and for God.

A Canadian lives in one of the most prosperous lands in the history of the world. The root of that prosperity can be found in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which recognizes the right of each person in the pursuit of happiness.

A Canadian is generous and Canadians have helped out just about every other nation in the world in their time of need, never asking a thing in return. Canadians welcome the best of everything, the best products, the best books, the best music, the best food, the best services and the best minds.

But they also welcome the least - the oppressed, the outcast and the rejected.

These are the people who built Canada. You can try to kill a Canadian if you must as other blood-thirsty tyrants in the world have tried but in doing so you could just be killing a relative or a neighbour. This is because Canadians are not a particular people from a particular place. They are the embodiment of the human spirit of freedom. Everyone who holds to that spirit, everywhere, can be a Canadian.

Please keep this going! Pass this around the World. Then pass it around again. It says it all, for all of us.

“Keep your stick on the ice”



**From sea to sea,
Proud to be a Canadian**

