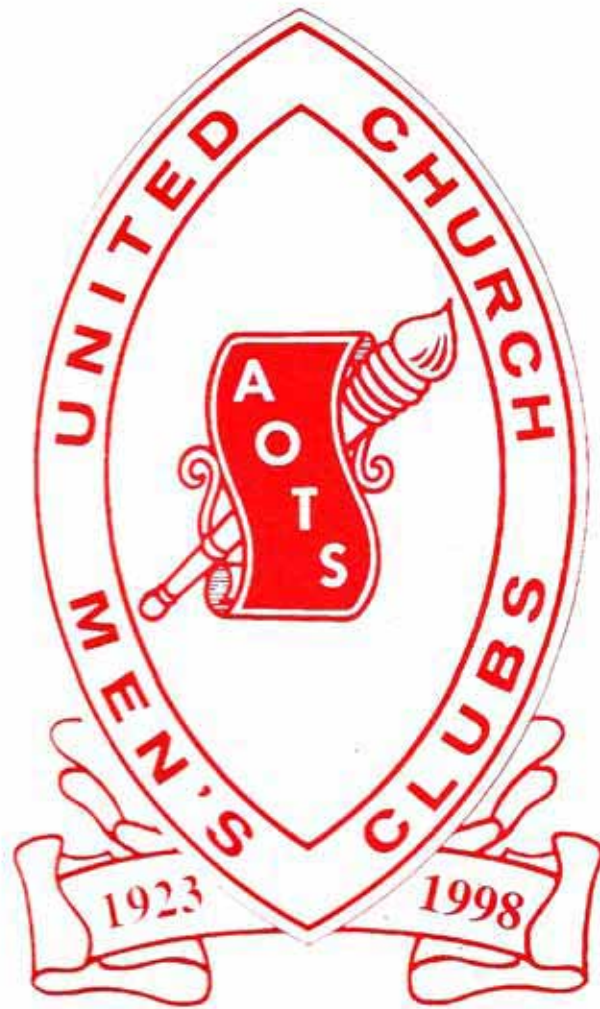


AS ONE THAT SERVES

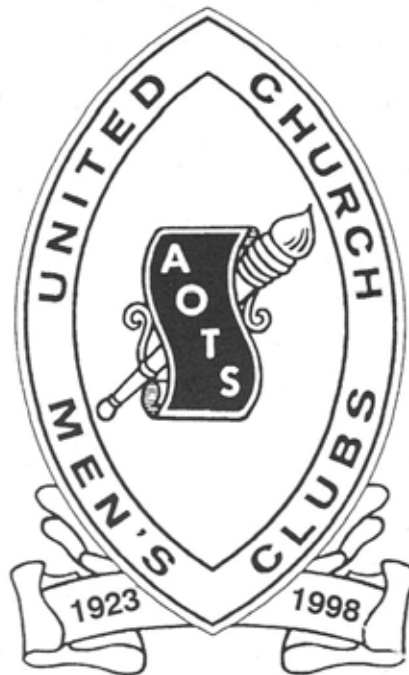


75 YEARS OF SERVICE

UNITED CHURCH AOTS MEN'S CLUBS

AS ONE THAT SERVES

A Short History of
AOTS Clubs
by
Fred G. Holberton, D.D.



Published 1998 by

The National Association of
United Church AOTS Men's Clubs

Introduction

I first came involved with AOTS as a charter member of the Lethbridge, Southminster United AOTS Club in the early 50'

My further contact with AOTS came when I was President of the South Alberta Presbytery Men, of which the District Council of AOTS was an important committee. This Council was constantly carrying out its task - visiting clubs, organizing new clubs and conducting workshops for club officers.

I attended the 2nd Annual AOTS Convention at Calgary in 1954. In 1959 I accepted the challenge of Ralph Young to become Field Secretary of the Board of Men in Western Canada - territory Vancouver Island to Fort William.

My years on National Staff, and later in Alberta Conference, found me regularly attending AOTS Suppers or events and realized that AOTS Clubs had a very important role in the congregations, and many ministers sought help in establishing AOTS Clubs.

This history is an attempt to produce a further historical record for the 75th Anniversary. I am grateful for Jack Bank's book - AS ONE THAT SERVES 'being a short history of the first half century'. This gave me many leads and I have quoted some from this record.

Dr Bill Hastings, the Association Archivist, and Jim Upright, the new National Secretary, have been of great assistance as I have tried to put this together. I did spend time at Chilliwack where Bill made available his records from the Archives and I was able to make note of many items of interest.

There is not space to give a complete detail of Clubs carrying out their purpose. I was pleased as I reviewed the historical record to see that AOTS Clubs in all parts of Canada were active and carrying out the Aims and Objects first established in 1923.

The United Church of Canada's reorganization of the 70's created many difficulties for the National Association as well as the clubs - many of them feeling that they were left in limbo - and historical records for some of this period of years are not too plentiful.

As I reviewed records to prepare this book, I was amazed at the amount of hours that many men from all parts of this country have put together as they carry out their witness for Christ in their particular area. We have been blessed with some outstanding leadership from both lay and minister.

This brief history can only name a few individuals, clubs, projects and events. There were many other persons and their involvement in club activities were countless. AOTS has been very fortunate with the calibre of excellent leadership through all these years and future achievements will continue as other leaders come forward.

Many challenges have been presented at supper meetings, at District Banquets, at Conventions and as we strive to accept these we are called to serve Him - He who came among us AS ONE THAT SERVES.

Fred G Holberton D.D.



Forward

The celebration of the Seventy Fifth Anniversary of AOTS at Ryerson United in Vancouver B.C. is most appropriate for it was here that AOTS was born. Indeed both the twenty-fifth and fiftieth anniversaries were celebrated here with the latter honouring the surviving charter members. The decision to save our heritage in book form through yet another quarter century of our existence, is a brilliant one especially in the eyes of your National Archivist. Like him you should see it as a tribute to the men who through AOTS dedicated their lives to service in His name. And finally there is the excellent choice of Dr. Fred Holberton to be the author of this segment of our history. The evidence for this claim lies in the very interesting and well written chronicle that you are about to read. How timely to include this book in the Anniversary.

Let us pause to pay tribute to the Ryerson Club which was formed within the Methodist faith in 1923, some two years before Union. Ryerson set the terms of service that we all have endorsed when we joined AOTS. Their service to their community and their home church are legion in number and have been well recorded in the unpublished history written by the late Dr. Harry Grant. Harry was born a historian and spent his life leading men and youth. Locally Ryerson's first project was the building of a gymnasium for their church. Its membership consisting mostly of business and professional types who pitched in with hammer, saw and labour. The Ryerson Club was hardly two years into its mandate when it began its phenomenal mission which was to spread the word from Vancouver Island to Newfoundland. They did so by including all men, be they Baptists, Presbyterians or whatever in the Vancouver region, then in the province of British Columbia and finally across what was then called the Dominion of Canada.

As Fred joins the last quarter century of AOTS service to the history by the late Jack Banks of its zenith years in the sixties and seventies, he portrays the continuing well being to the fortunes of the United Church itself. He tells of the ongoing success of the National Association with its Biennial Conventions and National projects. He records the continuation of regional Round Ups and Retreats. Last but not least he pays tribute to the successes of service at the club level amidst a general diminishing membership within the Church itself.

Fred is known to many as "Mr. Banff" for he has nourished, since its inception, this long lasting Men's Conference which encompasses British Columbia and the prairie provinces. Indeed he put together a book that follows the Banff Conference through some 35 years. For some he was known as the field officer for the Board of Men. To others he was the guest speaker at men's gatherings right across Canada. In later years he has taken his talents into the pulpit as a Diaconal Minister. Fred has done so well that St. Stephen's College conferred on him the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Divinity.

To the writer of this Forward, who after watching Fred in action over many years, saw in him a God given genius for seeking out the leadership talents of his fellow man. In truth he was a "Fisher of Men" as was his Lord and Master whose words as recorded by Luke gave us our name and motto "I am amongst you as one who serves".

Dr. W.G. Hastings

Our Founder - Dr. Herbert W. Riggs



H. W. RIGGS, M.D. F.R.C.S.

Herbert W. Riggs was born 1872 in Colborne, Ontario. He graduated from Manitoba Medical College and did post graduate work in Edinburgh, Baltimore, Germany and Austria.

He is credited with bringing the first x-ray machine into British Columbia. He was President of the North Pacific Surgical Association.

He was a member of Kiwanis Club and served as District Governor and International Vice-President. He was an active member of Kerrisdale Methodist Church in Vancouver.

It was during one of his travels to the Kiwanis International that he came up with dreams of a service club in the church. From this thinking and discussion with others, he founded AOTS Clubs in the church.

Dr. Riggs died in June 1950.

As One That Serves

The first AOTS dinner took place January 8, 1923 at Kerrisdale Methodist Church (later Ryerson United) in Vancouver, British Columbia. The cost of the meal was 40 cents each.

The guest speaker was Rev. Mr Guigan of Chalmers Presbyterian who chose the theme "Working Together". Dr W H Riggs was elected President at this historical dinner meeting.

The concept of a mens club in the church was an idea that Dr Riggs introduced after attending a Kiwanis Convention in Ontario. Consultations with his minister, Rev. J G Brown, resulted in the choice of the name A.O.T.S., which stands for "As One That Serves". This is part of a statement Christ made in Luke 22:27 "I am among you as one that serves"

In a small group meeting, prior to this first meeting of January 8, Dr Riggs shared his ideas, some of which appeared very daring to some.

He proposed, for instance, that membership should be entirely unrestricted - open to every man in the community, regardless of church affiliation. Each member would be expected to belong to and work on a committee. He apparently indicated that the potential of the laity was being ignored by the church and that AOTS Clubs would recruit a strong laity.

The 53 charter members set about ensuring that the service concept would become a reality. The first emphasis from the start was to be spiritual growth of the membership and this began to find expression in outreach. Their constitution carried such statements "service in the church and the community" "reinforce the standards of good citizenship", "broaden human sympathy", and "social service activities"

It was not too long before other church groups began making enquiries of this club and they set about organizing other AOTS Clubs in the Vancouver area. Six clubs were in place and they met January 21, 1924 to form the Vancouver and Lower Mainland District Council of AOTS Clubs. Here again, Dr Riggs became the first President and the Council set its objectives as:

"to promote united action of the clubs in the interest of better community life and better citizenship by practical application of the teaching of Jesus in the life and organization of the community"

During this period of time talks were proceeding to a possible union of Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational Churches in Canada. This was consummated June 10, 1925 and the following statements come from the record of the First General Council of the United Church of Canada.

The first reference appeared on page 128 under the heading "Promotion of Men's Organizations," and read as follows:

"The General Conference approved our recommendation concerning the need of mobilizing the manpower of each congregation for the Kingdom of Christ, and placed upon our Board the responsibility of carrying out the plan. We seek in every possible way to foster such organizations, and endeavor to help each to become a vital force in assisting the Church to win success both in its local activities and connexional enterprises. The AOTS (As One That Serveth) plan is proving a most valuable men's organization for Christian work."

The second reference is on page 228 and is contained in the report of the committee on "Life and Work of the Church", subsection 5 reads as follows:

"That, believing it to be the will of God that the men of the United Church should take a more active part in the work of Christ's Kingdom, the General Council urges upon all congregations the organizing of Brotherhoods, or Men's Service Clubs, for the discussion and practical undertaking of the manifold tasks facing the Church of this day, and that the General Council send this recommendation to the Presbyteries."

It was further recorded in the minutes of the First General Council that: "The AOTS plan is proving a most valuable

men's organization for Christian Work".

It would appear that the three churches during their discussions recognized the important place of mens' clubs and included this in the record at the time of Union in June 1925.

It was years before subsequent General Councils recognized these important statements that were made at the First General Council.

The AOTS Club movement became strong in Churches in British Columbia - there were 35 clubs in the Vancouver area in 1935.

During the depression years they were instrumental in creating the AOTS Polytechnical School, with volunteer leadership, offering free instruction in trades and academic subjects to unemployed men. The Vancouver School Board and the B C Department of Education gave support, and the Government later took over the project.

The AOTS Clubs with other denominations pioneered the Prairie Relief Committee. This committee, with support from other agencies, sent an estimated 230 railway carloads of food, clothing and other necessities to various points on the prairies.

The movement from British Columbia to the rest of Canada came about in the mid 40's when D.R. Poole, the first

full time Executive Secretary, travelled extensively to form clubs. There were 49 Clubs in Canada in 1949.

The General Council had a Committee on Lay Activities which responded to an earlier request from the British Columbia Council to seek affiliation with the United Church of Canada. At the Winnipeg Convention of AOTS in 1952 time was devoted to discussing this and a resolution accepting in principle a basis for closer relationship with the United Church of Canada was approved.

The General Council had changed the name of this committee to be that of National Committee of United Church Men. In 1954 G Brydon McCrae, then President of the National Association, was invited to meet with this committee and these consultations led to the General Council of 1954 raising the Committee of United Church Men to that of the Board of Men, this becoming a top ranking administrative unit. Ralph C. Young became full time Secretary and the National Association of AOTS Clubs became a department of the new Board.

AOTS were pleased with this development as they saw the Board of Men developing a single purpose and program for all mens' clubs within the United Church of Canada. The strength of a wider fellowship and nationally developed resources would greatly support AOTS Clubs

and unaffiliated clubs, fellowships etc.

And again a name change - The United Church AOTS Men's Clubs.

The new Board of Men included nationally, the Board, whose membership was elected by the General Council, and the National Association of United Church AOTS Men's Clubs. At the Conference and Presbytery levels there were to be organizations of Conference Men and Presbytery Men. The District Councils of AOTS Clubs were to be an important part of the Presbytery Men Committees, their Councils becoming the Men's Club Committee. See details in United Church Manual.

There was to be a Committee of United Church Men in each Pastoral Charge and Sections 280, 281, and 282 of the United Church Manual dictate this organization.

The Board of Men was now functioning with a staff of six. All staff were to do field work according to their job descriptions and Phil Spence, who had been named by the General Council as an Assistant Secretary, was to also have the title of Executive Secretary of the National Association of United Church AOTS Men's Clubs. This was in accordance with the AOTS Constitution, which the Board of Men had accepted when they designated AOTS as the Men's Club Committee of the Board.

The Board of Men was to be a single

two-way communication between the Board and its National Committee of United Church AOTS Men's Clubs at the National level and with the men of every pastoral charge.

This new structure was working fairly well - much time had been given to ensure that the various committees and councils were being developed and the staff were keen to ensure that this was to be the effective program as outlined by the General Council.

But, alas, again we were to look at another new structure. The 20th General Council of the United Church of Canada introduced another organization detail for AOTS with the new Division of Congregational Life and Work. This Division was to take under its umbrella the existing Boards of Evangelism and Social Service, Christian Education, Men, and Women. The Rev. Dr. J Leng was named Secretary of this Division.

There was little change in the function of the Board of Men under this new concept, but this did not last too long - the church again taking time to further study structures.

The Record of Proceedings of the 24th General Council held at Niagara Falls in 1971 set up the Division of Mission in Canada and at the inaugural meeting of this Division existing Boards of Evangelism and Social Service, Christian Education, Men, Women and Home Missions will lose identity and phase into the new

Division.

At this inaugural meeting, Rev Harold Bailey, the new secretary of this Division, when questioned, made the following statement:

"There is no thought that the United Church Men, the United Church Women, or other lay organizations will cease to exist. It is the responsibility of this Division to support and encourage all viable organizations in the church."

This was not to be. First the staff was decreased and Secretary of the Board, Ralph Wilson, and Assistant Secretary Phil Spence, both went to the Division of Finance, Ralph to be Secretary of Pensions, and Phil to the Department of Stewardship Services. The Field Staff were assigned to new duties in the Conferences and Don Smith was the only staff retained in the New Division.

Mens Work in the Church now became linked with the Department of Church and Society within this New Division. The mandate of this new department was:

"to give leadership on policy, evangelical and moral issues, to encourage concern for and the involvement in these areas by pastoral charges, Presbyteries, Conferences and lay organizations and to develop patterns of financial support appropriate to the role".

The New Division then placed all work of the previous Boards of Men and

Women under two Secretaries at the national level - Don Smith and Ferne Graham. These two were given the responsibility for all lay involvement and development. These two Boards did have a total staff of twelve, both in the National Office and in the field, prior to launching the New Division of Mission.

There now began a steady decline of Mens Clubs in the United Church of Canada.

The Very Rev A.B.B. Moore was Moderator of the 24th General Council when the Division of Mission in Canada received authority to proceed.

In 1988 Dr Moore referred to the new Division in his Autobiography "Here Where We Live". His remarks are from page 157 of this book.

"It was not a great council but it did some good and significant things. The setting in the hotel ballroom was not very helpful, and the severe weather outside did not add to the cheeriness of the event. Much time was spent on restructuring the church. Every time the church grows discouraged over its condition, it seems to think that a new organization equates with revitalization. This is far from true; the renewal comes from within its members.

This council dealt with the divisional structure of the administrative arm of the church. There had been Boards

of Men, of Women, of Home Missions, of Christian Education, of Evangelism and Social Service. These were all brought together into the Division of Mission in Canada. Details of implementation, of appointment, or organization within the division, all took time and talk. Eventually, it was passed but no one was very sure whether it would work out or not. Personally, although I could not participate in the debate from the chair, I thought this solution to any problems which might exist, too monolithic. I think that subsequent years have proven that a large administrative instrument is not necessarily an efficient one. Moreover, segments of the church's work become neglected in the overall operation. Christian Education is one of these neglected areas. Our Canadian church has become more and more dependent on American materials. The work of the Boards of Men, of Women, and of Christian Education has become obscured."

During all this turmoil of structures into which they were caught, the National Association of United Church AOTS Mens Clubs attempted to carry the mandate introduced in 1923 by Dr. Riggs - 'membership unrestricted and open to every man in the community' - the means by which many men found the life in the church for themselves and their families. Through the years AOTS has emphasized spiritual growth of the membership and have helped to change the lives of thousands of men. Clubs have made opportunities

for men to grow in the Christian experience. Local congregations have been enriched with AOTS Clubs in their midst, and many men for the first time were serving in congregations and community.

Christianity began not as an ecclesiastical, but as a lay movement. AOTS is the lay movement. The only priests designated in the New Testament were the company of the committed. AOTS are part of that committed company. The early church did not depend on clergymen. Many AOTS men have responded and continue to do so to the needs of

clergy. The evangelists for the cause were the rank and file. AOTS men are evangelists. All were expected to witness for the cause. AOTS, since its beginnings, have effective witnesses. Christianity was a cell movement of the committed. AOTS clubs are cells of committed. One's daily life and work is one's field of Christian Service. AOTS men have exemplified this through their devotion to the aims and objects established 75 years ago and believed they have been called to a ministry of service by one God, one Father, in love and Christian hope.

NEWS ITEM 1954 - BC CONFERENCE WELCOMES AOTS

We were on the Church's rolls albeit only at the Conference level. Even while we banged on the door asking to be let in, our record of service grew and grew. If financial aid to the church is a measuring stick, ours had to read FULL. Collectively we have raised thousands; nay millions, for Christian related projects! Oftimes our efforts of nationwide Christian Community Services, would bring forth the weirdest reactions. We were accused of taking energy and money out of the local parish. Things like membership dues to keep the national organization going were often frowned upon. From time to time we were accused of not being religious enough while all the while our members were teaching Sunday School, leading youth groups, serving on the Session, etc., etc., etc. Because we ascribed to being a service club we were sometimes branded as Rah Rah Bous who were self promoters. Our critics refused to see that we're a service club with a "difference" in that we are Christ centred. Year after year, we turned the other cheek, remained loyal to the Lord and our Church. Year after year, we were kept outside.

Bill Hastings, Bridge Builder, September 1988

Seventy-Five Years of Service

- 1923 January 8, meeting of first AOTS Club at Kerrisdale Methodist Church. (Later Ryerson United Church)
- 1924 AOTS Clubs at Wesley, Marpole, Mount Pleasant, and Dunbar Heights Methodist Churches and Chalmers Presbyterian.
- Vancouver and Lower Mainland District Council of AOTS Clubs was formed.
- 1926 Annual District Council dinner was instituted - later developed as "Roundup" which continues in all parts of Canada to bring AOTS men together.
- 1932 First issue of HANDSHAKE appears as British Columbia's vehicle of communication. Tom Edwards first editor continued for eight years.
- 1934 Charles Atchison, later a National President, presented a travelling gavel to encourage clubs to visit with each other.
- 1935 District Council had 35 clubs on its roster - including Vancouver Scandinavian Mission, Japanese United and First Baptist Church.
- 1939 April 13, First all day Convention held at West Point Grey United Church with Banquet in evening at Hudson Bay Dining Room - 572 present.
- Per capita dues paid by each club was raised to 15 cents.
- 1940 Central AOTS Council formed.
- 1942 Vancouver District Council of AOTS seeks affiliation with United Church of Canada.
- 1944 AOTS Central Council raised \$5,000.00 for promotion of Boys' work throughout British Columbia.
- 1945 AOTS Clubs of British Columbia paid salary of Rev. Robert McLaren as B.C.'s first youth worker and encouraged him to build Christian Education Centre at Naramata.

Clubs at Ryerson, Chown Memorial, Canadian Memorial, St Giles, Knox, Dunbar Heights, West Point Grey, St. George, Grandview-Trinity, Grace, Crosby, West Vancouver all of Vancouver, and Kamloops, Penticton, Kelowna, Armstrong, West Summerland and Rosedale still report regular active meetings.

- 1946 Delbert R Poole employed as part time secretary and later full time duty as Executive Secretary and began task of promoting AOTS Clubs across Canada.
- Central Council of AOTS, later the National Association of AOTS Clubs, began negotiations with the Lay Activity Committee of the United Church of Canada. Further discussion on this possibility was held at the Winnipeg Convention in 1952.
- 1947 Name change to National Association of AOTS Clubs. George C. Skinner, President of Central and Vancouver Councils became first National President for interim term.
- D.R. Poole met with over 150 men from 31 Congregations at a supper meeting at St Stephens-Broadway in Winnipeg.
- First AOTS Club in Ontario at High Park United in Toronto.
- First AOTS Club in Quebec at Chalmers United in Verdun.
- 1948 Charles Atchison became President of National Association of AOTS Clubs. There were 47 Clubs in British Columbia and 31 in other provinces.
- First Clubs in Alberta - later an Alberta Council Elected Allan Jones as President.
- 1949 Annual Meeting in May of National Association of AOTS Clubs elected Charles Atchison as President and developed Vice-Presidents in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Ontario, Quebec and Saskatchewan.
- Formation of District Council at Regina Saskatchewan, elected Justice Harold Thompson as President.
- 1950 June - Dr H.W. Riggs, founder of AOTS, dies in Vancouver.
- 1951 General Council of United Church of Canada names Ralph C. Young as Secretary of the Committee of United Church Men, successor to Committee on Lay Activities.
- 1952 Manitoba Roundup - D.G. McKenzie became President. 32 Clubs in Manitoba.
- May 30 - June 1, National Convention at Winnipeg. G. Brydon McCrae elected President.
- Ralph C. Young, Secretary of the Committee of United Church Men meets with AOTS Council at Regina.

- 1953 AOTS Clubs of Calgary provide restoration work parties for McDougall Historic Church at Morley Alberta, originally built in 1875.
- First Elgin House Conference for United Church Men, including AOTS.
- The newly formed Edmonton AOTS Council receives an appeal from Edmonton Presbytery to accept sponsorship for operation and provision of a boys' camp. This was accepted and two camps for Junior and Senior totalling 65 boys were completed.
- 1954 June 12-13 Convention of National Association of AOTS Clubs held at Central United, Calgary, with G Brydon McCrae re-elected President. Hon. Justice H.F. Thompson of Regina was named Hon. President.
- General Council of the United Church of Canada raised status of Committee of United Church Men to that of Board of Men with Ralph C. Young as Secretary.
- The National Association of AOTS Clubs becomes a department of the new Board.
- 1955 Ralph F. Wilson named Associate Secretary of the Board of Men.
- Sidney E. Bagnall formed from a nucleus of twelve AOTS Clubs, Scarborough AOTS Glee Club with 45 voices.
- AOTS Clubs at Winnipeg, Brandon, Regina, Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge and Vancouver successfully sponsored presentation of Black Hills Passion Play from South Dakota.
- 1956 Delbert R. Poole retires as Executive Secretary of National Association of AOTS Clubs.
- 3rd Convention of National Association of AOTS Clubs held at Muskoka Beach with Dave Sherwood of Toronto being elected President.
- Phil H Spence named Executive Secretary of AOTS and Head Office moved from Vancouver to Toronto.
- An AOTS Club was formed on the Sarnia Indian Reserve. District Council President Jack Cleave presided and installed the officers.
- 1957 First AOTS Club in Hamilton at Centenary United Church.
- Melville, Sask. AOTS Club travel to Saltcoats to install officers at newly chartered club.

McKillop and Southminster AOTS Clubs at Lethbridge provide funds and manpower to build a 6 bed hospital unit at Canyon Church Camp, Waterton Lakes.

Nanton, Alberta AOTS Clubs have nearly 100 attend the annual Father and Son Banquet.

Whitehorse, Y.T. AOTS Club build new furniture for the Sunday School.

1958 (June 13-15) 4th Convention of National Association of AOTS Clubs held at Saskatoon. Charles Burritt of Burnaby was elected President. Dave Sherwood of Toronto was named Honorary President. The Convention approved the name change to NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF UNITED CHURCH AOTS MEN'S CLUBS.

1959 (Jan 8) 200 men of AOTS Clubs gather at Ryerson United to honour the Founder, Dr. . H.W. Riggs. 17 charter members of Ryerson were present.

3rd Convention of National AOTS elected Jack Dawson of Orangeville, Ontario as President.

PROGRAMS WITH A PURPOSE were introduced for use by AOTS Clubs.

The BRIDGE BUILDER, edited by W. Jack Banks, became the national men's communication under the Board of Men, replacing AOTS President's Letter and National News.

April 30 - 323 clubs registered under United Church AOTS Men's Clubs.

Fred G. Holberton of Lethbridge, Alberta, becomes Field Secretary of Board of Men for Western Canada -covering Vancouver Island to Fort William.

Sept. 18-20 - First Convention of National Association of United Church AOTS Men's Clubs held at Canadian Keswick Muskoka. Three hundred fourteen representatives from clubs were present.

December 31 - 425 clubs were enrolled with AOTS and other men's clubs making a total 651. There were 55 District Councils.

June 12-14 - 1163 men registered for 7th Elgin House Conference for Men.

Woodgreen UCAOTSMC, Toronto, members and wives hold Christmas Dinner on Christmas Day for 200 unemployed from Fred Victor Mission. They had earlier in December had another Christmas dinner to which each member brought as a guest a senior citizen from the community.

- 1960 Phil Spence visits Bermuda Presbytery of Maritime Conference - seven congregations with 6 clubs enrolled.
- 1961 General Council of the United Church meeting at Edmonton, "realizing that UCAOTSMC is a growing awareness of its importance as a revitalizing force in the Church and community", placed in the Manual of the United Church the organization of Men at all levels of the Church; Conference, Presbytery and Congregation.
- AOTS Clubs of Manitoba and Saskatchewan present Station-Wagon to PCTC at Fort Qu'Appelle.
- AOTS stalwart Harry O 'Dell with family, leave for India as full time Missionary (Ceramics Engineer)
- Allison McKinnon of Charlottetown P.E.I., appointed Field Secretary of the Board of Men for Eastern Canada.
- Ralph Young, Secretary of the Board of Men, takes leave of absence to serve as Secretary of Laity at the World Council of Churches, Geneva Switzerland.
- 2nd Convention of National Association of United Church AOTS Men's Clubs held at University of B.C. Aug. 25-27. Fred Saunderson of London, Ontario, elected President.
- 1962 Phil Spence named by General Council of the United Church to be an Assistant Secretary of the Board of Men. This appointment created other work within the Board of Men and his time with AOTS was curtailed.
- 1963 582 AOTS Clubs were chartered with the National Association and 255 other Men's Clubs in existence not affiliated with AOTS.
- Delbert R. Poole, first Executive Secretary of AOTS dies.
- 1964 AOTS Clubs of Presbyterian Church in Trinidad establish a Conference and Retreat Center.
- General Council of United Church of Canada determines that Board of Men, Women, Christian Education and Evangelism and Social Service are to operate under umbrella Division of Congregational Life and Work.
- General Council names Ralph F. Wilson as Secretary of Board of Men. 575 Clubs enrolled with AOTS National
- 1965 March-Duncan B.C. AOTS Choir with 21 voices entertain at Annual Roundup at New Westminster.

- August 25-27 - 4th National Convention of AOTS held at Queen's University, Kingston. Allan Jones of Calgary elected President.
- Donald G. Smith appointed Assistant Secretary of the Board of Men.
- 1966 W.A.R. AOTS Club - Wakefield, Alcove and Rupert, in Quebec, boast a membership of over 150.
- Scarborough AOTS Glee Club announces the release of their 4th Record - "Men in Harmony".
- 1967 Board of Men heard report of 416 AOTS Clubs affiliated.
- 5th Convention of National Association of United Church AOTS Clubs held at Banff Centre. Over 300 in attendance. Lorne Thornley of Scarborough was elected President.
- October - 709 men attend Annual Banff Men's' Conference.
- Some sixty congregations of Canadian Conference of Evangelical United Brethren merge with the United Church of Canada and a number of their men's clubs affiliate with the National Association of United Church AOTS Men's Clubs.
- 1968 The National Association embarked on a project to raise money from the sale of Tulips.
- Ralph Wilson resigns as Secretary of Board of Men to take position as Secretary of Pensions with the United Church.
- 1969 6th Convention of National Association held at University of Western Ontario, London, with Jack Cleave of Sarnia elected President. 271 Clubs enrolled.
- 1970 April 30 - Phil Spence leaves Board of Men to become Assistant Secretary of Department of Stewardship in the Division of Finance.
- Donald G. Smith became Acting Secretary of the Board of Men and Executive Secretary of the National Association of United Church AOTS Men's Clubs.
- Sept. 18-20 - Men's Club Committee of Division of CL&W meets at Cedar Glen, Bolton, Ontario
- 1971 General Council of United Church of Canada determines that Boards within the Division of Congregational Life and Work are to cease and to become part of the New Division of Mission in Canada.
- October -Hon. Harold F. Thompson, QC of Regina passes away at 86.

Donald Smith named Associate Secretary of Division of Mission with responsibility for lay activities in the Church.

7th Convention of National Association of United Church AOTS Clubs held at Charlottetown. Doug Phillips of Toronto elected President.

Former National President David Sherwood passes away November 26th.

December 11 - The last meeting of the Executive of the Board of Men was held in Toronto. Six Past Presidents of the National Association of United Church AOTS Men's Clubs were present - Bill Hastings, Allan Jones, Murray McPherson, Jack Cleave, Gordon Hall and Jack Dawson. BRIDGE BUILDER Editor Jack Banks was also present.

1972 Board of Men ceases to exist and is now located in the Department of Church and Society of the Division of Mission in Canada.

Donald Smith named as Associate Secretary of the New Division, and with Ferne Graham they are to have responsibility for all lay activities within the Church.

Ontario Roundup at Cedar Glen has attendance of 140 men, nearly half coming from clubs not affiliated with the National Association.

Last issue of the BRIDGE BUILDER. News of AOTS Clubs is now to appear in new Division Newsletter "Combo".

1973 Jan 15, some 200 men attend 50th Anniversary Dinner at Ryerson United in Vancouver. Four men from the first meeting in 1923 were present and received Life Memberships from the National Association. National President Doug Phillips, Don Smith, Murray Kerr and Fred Holberton were in attendance.

New Logo created for 50th Anniversary for official use.

50th Anniversary Celebrations were held in each Conference during this year.

A program for individual members was introduced for interested men who subscribe to the Aims of AOTS - and who are no longer affiliated with Clubs.

1975 Harry Colnett, active member from British Columbia, dies from heart attack at National Convention.

Increase in National dues paid by affiliated clubs to \$2.00 per member yearly.

Creation of Life and Individual memberships by National Association.

1977 Don Morton, Conference President of British Columbia reports of 128 separate visits throughout the Conference.

AOTS Club at Langley B.C. purchases new piano for Sanctuary.

1978 Wilmar Heights Club fund raiser was sale of "The freshest, most delicious Texas oranges and grapefruit you will ever eat". Sold over 200 cartons.

Thamesview, Fullerton, Ontario celebrated 20 years at their regular meeting with 18 of 33 charter members present.

April 1 - 41st Roundup of B.C. Clubs at Langley with 90 men from 31 clubs.

Esquialt B.C. Club celebrates 24th anniversary.

Dr. Bill Hastings of West Vancouver named Archivist of National Association.

Scarborough AOTS Glee Club celebrates 20 years with special concert and service at Timothy Eaton Memorial United Church in Toronto.

Annual Roundup of men of Belleville Presbytery had over 100 men present.

St Paul's, Oakville, Ontario distributes \$2092.18 to various youth groups in church and community.

St Matthews AOTS Club, Lewisporte, Newfoundland sponsored a Fellowship Camp Weekend with over 100 men in attendance.

Westworth AOTS Club, Winnipeg, held a series of presentations and discussion at their meetings - "Back to the Basics"

Duncan AOTS Club with 68 members, report that they operate - 1. Every man on a Committee. 2. Every Committee working. 3. Projects of all descriptions. 4. Visiting other clubs. 5. Devotions at every meeting. 6. Annual change of officers.

Al Smith of Toronto, named Executive Secretary of the National Association of AOTS Clubs.

1979

Wesley AOTS, Hamilton, Bermuda caters Annual Thanksgiving Turkey Supper each year, this being the 25th year.

First Wetaskiwin AOTS Club places float in North American Winter Carnival.

Gordon AOTS, Victoria B C, do counselling and contact with a group of young boys, known as AOTS Pals.

Trinity AOTS North Bay, Ontario, held a Founder's Night when they paid tribute to all charter members as they celebrated 25th Anniversary.

National Convention established a Spiritual Life Committee and encouraged all clubs to do the same.

Regina District Council (18 Men) planted 75 dozen flowers at Mutchmor Place Lodge.

Recognition of 29 years of service by AOTS Clubs of Winnipeg who have faithfully supplied 12 men every Sunday to wheel hospital patients to worship services and back to their rooms.

1980

St Paul's, Stirling, Ontario, contribute \$500.00 to Dr. McClure project "Insulin for children" at Zaire Africa.

More than 100 men attend annual Regina Roundup with Dr. Murray McPherson at speaker.

Duncan AOTS Annual Mother's Day Tea raises \$280.00 and Garage Sale raises \$2,055. - these proceeds going to furnish room at new Cowichan Care Hospital.

Grace-St James, Peterborough contribute \$1500.00 for installation of new heating system in church.

Charles C. Burritt, first National President of the United Church AOTS Men's Clubs dies Sept. 1, at age 64.

1981

Harrow-Malden, Harrow, Ontario Club sponsor Beavers and Cubs.

Gibson Memorial AOTS, Fredericton N B Raised \$400.00 from annual Bean and Pancake Supper and contributed proceeds to Scout Group Committee.

154 men gather at Geneva Park April 10-12 for Annual Ontario Roundup.

St Anthony AOTS of St Anthony, Newfoundland, included in funds to many projects, \$456.00 plus birthday and Christmas gifts to two children in Israel.

- 1982 Westwood AOTS, Winnipeg, hold reunion of former members to celebrate 30 years of service.
- Wilson United AOTS Club, Margaree Centre, N.S. every January harvests and stores ice for use by all church groups and are well known in the area for their annual home made ice cream sale.
- THE HANDSHAKE reintroduced in B.C. and edited by Dr. Bill Hastings.
- Scarborough AOTS Glee Club joins Metropolitan Service Band in Toronto to stage an evening with Dr. Bob McClure raising \$3200.00 for Dr. McClure's projects in Africa.
- Duncan AOTS Club in B.C. had over 200 at their Annual Burns Night and raised \$877.00.
- St Luke's, Sudbury Ontario hold 25th Annual Jiggs Dinner for over 500 people.
- St. Anthony, Newfoundland, hold meeting with prayer and bible study, 7:30 to 8:30, business 8:30 to 9:30 and then, lunch and fellowship.
- Prince George B.C. AOTS Club assumes responsibility for planning of the 25th Annual Banff Men's' Conference.
- 1983 Windsor AOTS, Newfoundland, visit at Senior Citizen's Home regularly, and conduct worship service once a month.
- Jack Cleave of Sarnia Ontario, named Executive Secretary of National Association.
- Wakefield -Alcove - Rupert, W.A.R. AOTS Club, celebrate 25 years of service at Alcove, PQ.
- Gold Springs AOTS Milk River, Alberta celebrate 20th Anniversary.
- 1984 Kingston Road, Toronto, AOTS Club sponsors Pee-Wee Hockey team which represented Canada at games in the United States.
- Cranbrook, BC AOTS Club holds annual father and son weekend at Rock Lake Camp.
- Knox Winnipeg, AOTS Club sponsors 14 young boys and girls to summer camp at Fairfax, MB.
- 1985 Gaetz Memorial AOTS Club at Red Deer celebrates Charter night with over 200 present and National President Cyril Locke as Speaker. He also gave a sermon at a morning service which the club conducted.

Tri-County SW Ontario AOTS District Council operates a Volleyball League.

- 1986 Consecon AOTS Club, Ontario - over 100 men came to help the club celebrate 25th Anniversary.
- Queen Street AOTS Kingston report 126 regular users of "Observer on Tape"
- THE HANDSHAKE began printing as a National Newsletter.
- 1987 Esquimalt AOTS Club celebrate 32nd anniversary with National President Jack Arthur as Speaker.
- Manitoba District Council sponsored a Youth Recognition Night. 49 clubs in Winnipeg area asked to send two leaders ages 16 - 25. Twenty-two Congregations responded.
- Kamsack (Sask.) AOTS Club sponsors a twenty member (male/female,young/old) Mandolinata Orchestra.
- 1988 National AOTS Project Committee reports \$41,290,00 raised from AOTS and UC Men's Clubs to Hospital Project to date. \$14,500 for education of two native staff - one in maintenance and one in administration. \$10,390. to purchase Cardiac Defibrillator and Monitor \$10 000. B-Scan Ultrasonic Fuoptic \$12,000. Oximeter
- 1989 Cheque \$7,000.00 - last of total \$60,000.00 delivered to Hospital committee of B.C. Conference. Clubs from across Canada supported this National Project.
- AOTS Roundup of Ontario - AOTS celebrates 66 years of service.
- 1990 Division of Mission in Canada advises National AOTS to expect a cut in their budget support.
- Oak Bay AOTS, Victoria reports over \$3500.00 net from Garage Sale, They were winners of D.R. Poole Award.
- Former National President Allan Jones dies in Victoria.
- Feb. - Mar - Lloyd Clark and others with Past President Jack Cleave join 24 others to build a second story on a Moravian School in Bluefields, Nicaragua.
- Westwood AOTS in Winnipeg celebrate 49th Anniversary in October with gigantic reunion.

Park Street AOTS, Chatham, Ontario, presents symbols of fellowship - travelling gavel and cross, to be used in club visitations.

Eric Street United AOTS Ridgetown, Ontario has 12 members, average age 79

1991 AOTS Sponsored Celebration of Faith in B.C. celebrates 35th Anniversary at Langley B.C.

Gaetz United AOTS Club, Red Deer, Alberta, hold special Anniversary Ladies Night, honouring 142 former members and calling the roll for 42 members present. Western Vice President Dr. Fred Holberton represented the National Association.

1992 National Treasurer reports dues of \$8194.00 from 88 clubs. Declining revenue corresponds to declining membership in all mens groups.

Ken Lane assumes duties as Executive Secretary of National Association of United Church AOTS Mens Clubs.

St Paul's AOTS, Deer Lake, Newfoundland, presents annual scholarship to student showing high academic achievement.

April - AOTS Roundup of Ontario Clubs celebrates 70 years of service.

Minnedosa, Man. AOTS celebrate 40th Anniversary.

Membership Fee raised to \$15.00 per member at 18th National Convention.

1994 \$6,000.00 presented to Dr. P. Newberry to purchase Gastroscope as part of National Hospital Project.

Duncan BC AOTS hold 40th Anniversary Fun Fair - all sixty members serve on club committees.

United Church Hospital at Bella Bella B.C. purchases incubator with funds from National AOTS Hospital Project.

1996 Former National President Lorne Thornley dies December 24th at Scarborough, Ontario. He will be remembered also as Business Manager of Scarborough AOTS Glee Club.

Former National President Tom Ferguson passes away at Trenton, NS.

1997 Eastminster AOTS, Belleville, Ontario, has now taken responsibility for "Observer on Tape".

20th Convention at Gander approves National Project sponsoring youth to camp.

"President's Man" Award instituted and recognizes the late Lorne Thornley.

Dr. Bill Hastings of Lindell, B C retires as Editor of THE HANDSHAKE.

1998

Alberta Roundup of Mens Clubs, hosted by AOTS Clubs of Wetaskiwin and Red Deer drew over 120 men to hear Moderator Bill Phipps on theme "the future of Mens' Work"

Jim Upright of Abbotsford, B.C. named National Secretary of UCAOTSMC.

Aug. 14-16 - 75th Anniversary of AOTS celebrations at Ryerson United Church, Vancouver.

Announced that 21st National Convention will be held at Geneva Park YMCA and Convention Centre . Lake Cowiching, Ontario, April 30 - May 2, 1999.

"I was invited to an AOTS Club by my neighbor. At one meeting the speaker was a member of the Field Staff who challenged us to go to Banff Mens Conference. I did - returned home left my job and entered University, graduated and was ordained and served in a number of pastoral charges before retiring."
Minister's quote

"I want to say this; that in congregations where I have served, and where there was a men's club, it was such strength in the work of the ministry that I covet that experience for every minister and every congregation in the United Church of Canada."
Minister's quote



7th National Convention of the
National Association of United Church AOTS Men's Clubs
held at Charlottetown, P.E.I. Aug. 20 - 22, 1971



Douglas N. Phillips, a Lawyer from Toronto, and a Past President of St. Paul's (Scarborough) AOTS Club was elected President at the 7th Convention in Charlottetown, PEI. .

During his year as President, Doug Phillips, with the assistance of Executive Secretary Don Smith, organized and attended 50th Anniversary celebrations in most Conferences. He and Don went to Vancouver with Murray Kerr of Winnipeg and Fred Holberton of Calgary to attend with 200 other men the 50th Anniversary Dinner held at Ryerson United Church.

This article appeared in THE HANDSHAKE May 1945. These principles still apply when organizing an AOTS Club.

HOW TO ORGANIZE AN A.O.T.S. CLUB.

1. Obtain a copy of the A.O.T.S. Manual by writing to James E. Baine, 151 West 14th Avenue, Vancouver.
2. If possible, have some of the men visit an A.O.T.S. club already in operation.
3. Select five or more key men to whom the objects and methods of the movement are explained.
4. Form a provisional organization and call a meeting of all the men of your church and community.
5. Carefully plan the program of your first meeting. A good meal, an inspiring community song leader and a welcoming committee are essential. If possible, have a speaker experienced in the A.O.T.S. movement. If this is not possible, have a speaker who will stress the A.O.T.S. principles of Friendship --- Sympathy --- Service.
6. Form committees as outlined in the manual and start on some project to get all the men working. This is most important as it has been proved that the minute a man starts being of service to others he is interested in the club

Membership in the club should not be confined to church members or adherents. It has been the experience of all A.O.T.S. Clubs that many men of the community were never interested in the church and rarely attended until they became members of the Men's Club. Some of the most valued members of churches in Vancouver were brought into the church in this manner.

When several clubs are organized in one city or community, form a district council upon which all clubs can be represented. Stress interclub visitation. The men of the various clubs in Vancouver have become well acquainted with each other and are finding the greatest personal satisfaction in the fellowship which is derived from such visits. The A.O.T.S. Travelling Gavel which is taken by members of one club to the meeting of another club is assisting in welding the men into one great brotherhood.



8th Biennial Convention of the National Association of
United Church AOTS Men's Clubs
held at University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, August 24 to 26 1973



Dr. William G. Hastings, a dentist from West Vancouver, was elected President at the Convention. Bill has served in many capacities in British Columbia from the early days of AOTS.

Dr Graham Pincock, Chairman of the Board of Men, speaking at the 8th National Convention, stated:

"Change is an essential part of living and AOTS can change . But it cannot abandon the basic principles upon which it stands, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and service to it's Lord and Master. The basic function of AOTS is to be a witnessing arm of Christ and the Gospel in the Community and the world."

The National Association of UNITED CHURCH AOTS MEN'S CLUBS

Thousands of men find their first contact with a dynamic, growing force in our Church in the men's club of the local congregation. Here - whether in the inner city or suburb, town or rural area - are the "grass roots" of the laymen's movement, involving the many activities and organizations under the purview of the Board of Men. In the membership of the Clubs, and in the scores of thousands of United Church Men who are not yet members, lies a potential of power for Christian witness beyond compute.

Every men's club within the United Church of Canada is invited to become part of the National Association of UNITED CHURCH AOTS MEN'S CLUBS. Only thus can it reap the full benefit of support and assistance from the wider fellowship - while retaining full autonomy in its own affairs - and also contribute of its own strength and experience to the nation - wide movement.

What is the Aim of UNITED CHURCH AOTS MEN'S CLUBS?

To promote Christian fellowship, to deepen the spiritual life of men, and to develop an effective program of Christian service.

What are their Objects?

- * To help the men of the Church and community to grow in knowledge and love of God as we know Him in Jesus Christ, and in devotion to Christ and His way of life.
- * To increase their knowledge of, interest in and loyalty to the Church and its mission.
- * To develop consecrated and effective leadership.
- * To encourage and give practical assistance to Boys' and Youth Work in the Church and community.
- * To participate actively in the Church's efforts to strengthen Christian family life.
- * To develop programs, projects and activities that will interest the men of the Church and community in becoming active club members, and in achieving the aim of the club.
- * To sponsor UNITED CHURCH AOTS MEN'S CLUBS in neighboring churches.



9th Biennial National Convention of the Association of
United Church AOTS Men's Clubs
held at Carleton University, Ottawa August 24 to 26, 1975



Ken Lane of Burlington, Ontario
was elected President at the 9th
Bi-Annual Convention.

Harry Colnett Memorial Scholarship was instituted in 1976 in memory of Harry Colnett who passed away suddenly at the Convention in Ottawa. This scholarship is available to any male or female studying agriculture and willing to spend time in an underprivileged country. Harry Colnett was a Past President of British Columbian Conference of AOTS Clubs.

The well-beloved motto of AOTS since its inception, and of the unified UNITED CHURCH AOTS MEN'S CLUBS in recent years, now applies to all men's work within our Church.

Wider Responsibilities

*The biennial Convention at Halifax in August 1963 accepted as the primary responsibility of men's clubs the duty TO BE AN ARM OF THE PASTORAL CHARGE REACHING OUT IN CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP TO ALL MEN.

*The Men's Club Committee of the Board of Men (formerly the National Council of UC-AOTS-MC) now has the function of assisting all men's clubs, fellowships, etc., throughout the United Church of Canada, whether enrolled as UNITED CHURCH AOTS MEN'S CLUBS or not. It continues of course to encourage clubs to enrol and so fully benefit from, and contribute to, the unified program.

*Men's Club Committees of Conference and Presbytery UCM Councils (formerly UC-AOTS-MC Conference and District Councils respectively) assume, in the simplified, decentralized pattern, responsibility for all men's clubs within their area.

*Finally the local men's club, through its representation on the Committee of United Church Men of the Pastoral Charge, has found its concern widened to include all men's work within the congregation and community.

Aim and Purpose

The Halifax Convention also urged the Board of Men and its Men's Club Committee to greater effort in emphasizing the spiritual value inherent in our club program, and called for new depth of commitment to Christ.

Organizational changes affecting club work seek only to further the aim and purpose of every club: "TO PROMOTE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP, TO DEEPEN THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF MEN, AND TO DEVELOP AN EFFECTIVE PROGRAM OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE."

As Board of Men Chairman Dr. Graham Pincock told a Winnipeg club recently, to come alive as a vibrant force in the church and community, to reach the men "on the fringe" in a meaningful way, the club's program and projects must sustain this purpose.

Dr. Harry Grant, Vancouver, one of the founders of AOTS said in 1956, "there is no economy, financial, or social prestige to be gained by joining AOTS; but it offers more opportunity for giving, with less chance of getting any tangible return, than any other group."

Men's service groups of all types were booming, including AOTS in 1956. Our service record was second to none but being of a Christ centered nature there was indeed none of the social amenities as outlined in the above quote.

However, as AOTS evolved into a Christian service club there also evolved a driving force within its membership that was wonderful in itself.

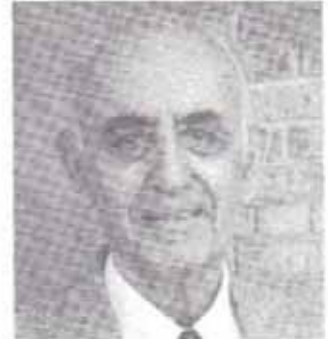
Not too far along this path we were to discover the wonderful rewards, the fuel if you will, that made it all worthwhile. As we went along through this busy but chosen route we started to share. We shared with counsel, we shared in prayers,, we sat at the feet of the finest theological minds lay and clergy, but the biggest plus of all was our growth in Christ "both in body and in wisdom, gaining favour with God and man"



10th Biennial Convention of the National Association of
United Church AOTS Men's Clubs
held at Dalhousie University, Halifax July 15 - 17, 1977



David W. Murphy of Park Royal United Church, Charlottetown, was elected President. A General Insurance Agent in his home town, David suffered a near fatal heart attack after taking office and was forced to resign. The National Council asked Eastern Vice President, Tom Ferguson of Trenton, Nova Scotia, to assume the Presidency.



Tom Ferguson

At the Convention:

- Harry Colnett Memorial Fund, established at the 9th Convention, reported receipts of \$4,641.91 of our objective of \$5,000.00.
- Convention took time to agenda a Training Session on Leadership Development.
- The 10th Convention established the program "Second Mile Support". This was an opportunity for men in the clubs to give further financial support to the National Council to proceed with production of promotional videos, the Spiritual Life Handbook and other items that will assist the local clubs.
- Don Smith was the banquet Speaker. Here is an excerpt from his address:

"Recently I've been thinking about the marvellous story of Paul's perilous journey to Rome, his last journey, as recorded in Acts 27 and 28. He was a prisoner in chains on that voyage, yet how marvelously effective and successful he was.

We are meeting in the Maritimes and here we are conscious of the nautical dimensions of our nation. We might well, as persons, and as a movement take some lessons from Paul. We too are on a voyage and we are, to some extent at least, bound by chains of tradition, habit, selfishness, apathy - you name it! Paul proved to be a worthy old salt by his clear sense of purpose on that voyage, by priority of that purpose, by his constant performance, and by his dogged persistence! We would do well to emulate his example in our voyage into the future. Paul had a vision and we as "Salty Christians" have a vision too! The Christian vision comes to us from the past, it is powerful in the living present, it is the future fashioned in accordance with God's goal and purpose.

We are in the most important business in the world! The valuable cargo Paul's ship carried was not in the hold of the ship but what Paul carried within himself! The same goes for you and me. AOTS is not the boat but the vision of life we carry within ourselves. The boat is disposable, the vision is not!

While in Halifax, we've heard about the famous explosion which occurred in the harbour in 1917. I hope in 1977 Halifax may be the scene of another explosion - a different kind of explosion, one of great constructive force which will have a fall-in of faith and action by AOTS members throughout this land and beyond."



11th Biennial Convention of the National Association of
United Church AOTS Men's Clubs
held at the University of Toronto, July 27 - 29, 1979



Dr. A Murray McPherson, Professor of Curriculum, Mathematics and Natural Sciences at the University of Manitoba, was elected President. He has been President of his own club, Westworth in Winnipeg and has served on Manitoba District Council of AOTS.

Some Convention Actions:

- A presentation was made to Don Smith for his long service with the Board of Men, and also as Executive Secretary of the National Association of United Church AOTS Mens' Clubs.
- The D R Poole Trophy went to Victoria Avenue UCAOTSMC at Chatham, Ontario.
- The Dave Sherwood trophy was presented to St James-Assiniboia Club of Winnipeg.
- Executive Secretary Al Smith included a DREAM in his annual report "My "Dream" for AOTS is that it be the network for Men's Work in the United Church with the Purpose to lead men to an understanding of the work and witness of the Church, that through commitment to Jesus Christ, they may fulfill the Ministry to which they are called in the home, in daily work, in the community and in the world. AOTS is the arm of the Church reaching out in Christian Fellowship to all men in an effort to deepen the spiritual life of men, and to promote, encourage and foster Christian Fellowship which will find expression in Christian service."

4 D's for AOTS

In his address on November 19, 1977 to the 18th AOTS Roundup for Belleville Presbytery Bay of Quinte Conference, Don Smith challenged the AOTS with the consideration of four D's for AOTS. The meeting of over 100 men was held in Selby United Church, a building that is 102 years old.

"What is your dream for AOTS?" Don asked the men as he spoke about the first 'D' for Dreams. The second 'D' is for Depth. Don't play around in the shallow water. Jesus said "launch out into the deep and then lower your nets". The AOTS must not be bound by tradition, organizational patterns etc. but prepare for Diversity, the third 'D'. This leads into the fourth 'D' of Daring. We must dare to experiment and try various things if we are to succeed in our dreams for AOTS.



12th National Convention of the
United Church AOTS Men's Clubs
held at University of Calgary, Calgary August 21-23, 1981



Gordon Hall of Waterloo,
Ontario was elected
National President.

Some Convention action and hi-lites:

- Western Barbecue with special Program and Worship service held at Rafter 6 Ranch, west of Calgary.
- The theme speaker, Rev. Dr. Alan Reynolds, was the present minister of Ryerson United Church at Vancouver.
- D.R. Poole Trophy awarded to Victoria Avenue AOTS, Chatham Ontario.
- Dave Sherwood trophy went to St Paul's AOTS, Oakville, Ontario who reported a 70% increase in membership.
- Dr. Reynolds said in his closing remarks:

" We live in a day of great change, a day in which it is difficult to foresee what will be the future of A O T S, the future of men's work within the United Church of Canada, indeed when it is difficult to foresee the future of the United Church of Canada itself.

But I do believe that if you continue IN HIS SERVICE to combine the service of God and the service of humanity, and to care for others with works of love and share with others the word of faith, you will be building on the foundation on which the future must be built - and not just the future of A O T S, or even the future of the United Church of Canada, but the future of our country and our culture, and indeed the future of the human race."

"When approached by a Pastoral Relations Committee I have asked if their congregation has an AOTS Club. These clubs have been a real support in my ministry."
Minister's Quote

"The AOTS organization has meant a great many things to our congregation and to myself as the minister. I find A.O.T.S. offers a fine contact between minister and men."
Minister's Quote



13th National Convention of the
United Church ACTS Men's Clubs
held at Memorial University, St John's Newfoundland, July 22 to 24, 1983



Cyril Locke of Springdale, Newfoundland, was elected President. Cyril was the Newfoundland Conference representative on the Board of Men.

Some Convention action and highlights:

- Al Smith, Executive Secretary for five years, advises the Convention of his intention to leave this position as he has now become President of Toronto Conference AOTS.
- Ken Turner of Edmonton, was named Editor of the National AOTS Newsletter.
- The D.R. Poole Award went to Victoria Avenue AOTS at Chatham, Ontario.
- National Treasurer Ernie Orpin presented a balance Budget of \$37,800.00. Delegates approved unanimously the proposal to assist the medical work of the United Church Hospitals. The first objective of \$16,000.00 will be used to fund the native training programs at R W Large Memorial Hospital in Bella Bella, B C. Two people on the staff of this Hospital will now be able to take further training in their fields - business management and Plant Engineer.
- The Standing Committee for Youth was established and is centered in the Chatham area with Dale Maris as Chairman.
- The Convention heard of the thirty years of Hospital Service by AOTS Clubs in Winnipeg - the bringing of personnel in wheel chairs and beds to the Sunday worship services. Thirty years of fifty two weeks per year with 10 men each Sunday adds up!

"AOTS is one of the finest organizations within the church and I heartily recommend it to the attention of my colleagues in the ministry."
Minister's Quote

"When approached by a Pastoral Relations Committee I have asked if their congregation has an AOTS Club. These clubs have been a real support in my ministry." Minister's quote



14th National Convention of the
United Church AOTS Men's Clubs
held at Huntington University, Sudbury, Ontario August 16 - 18, 1985



Jack Arthur, Belleville, Ontario was elected President, He is a Past President of Westminster AOTS Club, Belleville, a Past President of Bay of Quinte Conference AOTS and at time of this Convention was National Vice President for Central Canada.

Convention Action and Highlights:

- Heard that Queens Street AOTS Club of Kingston, Ontario, began project of the United Church Observer on Tape. They purchased \$4,000.00 of special equipment to do this.
- Victoria Avenue UCAOTSMC of Chatham, Ontario is awarded the D R Poole Trophy.
- The Rev Hope Jackson, President of Manitou Conference, in her message of greetings to the Convention, made these closing remarks:

Jesus was called a meek man, because He had completely given himself to God's will. The Greek word for 'meek' means 'be tamed, under control.' So the meek person is the tamed one, the one under control of the Spirit of God.

Now that takes courage! And many men today do not have that kind of courage! It takes a strong man, a man of great strength and courage to be meek; to be a man under God.

The Men's Clubs of the United Church could be the bulwark, the tower of strength for the Kingdom of God, and for His Church. If in your programmes, in your promotion, in your meetings, you could project the image that:

1. In the church we can have fun, and we can let ourselves go free to be ourselves;
2. In the church it is not a sign of weakness to admit our dependence upon God; to lean on Him;
3. That we are not ashamed to confess our faith openly and publicly to all who know us; and

then, I believe, that the A.O.T.S. and Men's Clubs of the United Church could fulfill a great need within the church.



15th National Convention of the
United Church AOTS Men's Clubs
held at Canadian Bible College, Regina, Sask. July 31- Aug. 2, 1987



Ernest Stafford, born in Derby, England, a member of both Duncan and Lake Cowichan AOTS Clubs on Vancouver Island, was elected President. He is Past President of Vancouver Island District Council and also of the B C Conference of AOTS Clubs.

Some Convention Highlights and Actions:

- Robert Lewis of Amherstburg, Ontario, was named Executive Director, succeeding Jack Cleave.
- National Hospital Project reported to the Convention that since the start of this project in 1983, \$34,890.00 has been raised by AOTS and other Mens Clubs.
- Gordon UCAOTSMC of Victoria B C was awarded the DR Poole Trophy.
- A highlight was the Louis Riel Presentation at Historic Government House, residence of the Lieutenant-Governors of the Northwest Territories and Saskatchewan from 1891 to 1945 (restored in 1980).
- The Lieutenant-Governor of Saskatchewan, Fred Johnson, presented greetings and included these words in his statement to the Convention:

Noting that he had been a member of the United Church for nearly 60 years (his Methodist parents having come to Canada from England in 1928), and that during this time he had watched it grow, in good years and bad, he said that he often wonders where, as a Church, we are going. In addressing this question he said he would, for a moment, take off his garb of neutrality and "speak from my heart". He related how his questioning began about 20 years ago upon hearing the report of an international meeting of the Student Christian Movement, a meeting that seemed to have given more attention to the social and economic problems of students than to the message of Jesus Christ. Perhaps, he suggested, this was an indicator of the kind of change that has come to the United Church. Today, he said, many members are questioning what is happening in our Church, firmly believing that we are spending "an inordinate amount" of time, energy, and resources on a multitude of social and political problems, with relatively too little being given to proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ (the audience responding with applause). Drawing on several examples, he then went on to emphasize the need for us, as a Church, to regain a proper sense of the real mission of the Christian church in our society.



16th National Convention of the
United Church AOTS Men's Clubs
held at Mount Allison University, Sackville, N B July 7 -9 1989



Robert Lewis of Amherstburg, Ontario was elected President;. He is a former National Treasurer and had just completed a two year term as Executive Secretary.

Action at the 16th National Convention:

- Club affiliation fees increased to \$10.00 per member as of Jan 1, 1990
- Al Smith of Etobicoke, Ontario named Executive Secretary.
- Reports of decline in Membership.
- David Sherwood Trophy to Lakefield AOTS Club of Lakefield Ontario.
- D R Poole Trophy to Oak Bay AOTS Club, Victoria B C.
- United Church Hospital project has raised \$ 50,226.00 to date from AOTS and other Mens' Clubs across Canada.
- Rev Robert A Crooks, Woodroffe United Church, Ottawa, Ontario was the theme speaker using the theme "The Christ of the Crest". He felt strongly that we need to emphasize the place of Christ in our Christian Faith.

NEWS ITEM· 1923 AOTS IS BORN

Yes! AOTS is eligible for the old age pension and this birthday have slipped by unnoticed. Ironically this is the year the Church wishes to put us out to pasture. This is a tragedy that can not be allowed to happen. Is this the just reward for the men who we are honouring here today plus the AOTS membership, past and present? We who have served Christ, and through Him, the United Church of Canada while never being allowed to feel that we "AOTS" are family? We who only wish to "Serve" in accordance with Christ's teachings. Are we to be turned out? Cast adrift? Why are we unwanted? Unloved? Are we dissidents in the eyes of the present power structure?

W.G. Hastings, Bridge Builder, September, 1988

Historic Gavel

On Nov. 9 1953 this Travelling Gavel was presented to the Vancouver Island District Council by it's brother Council on the Mainland. On Nov. 23 1989 the original Diary was replaced by a new one. It gave up the following history. Made 153 stops at 21 Clubs accompanied by 844 "Guardians". The spirit of the Gavel is described as follows in the log:

" The Gavel is to be passed from one AOTS Club to another on Vancouver Island thereby stimulating and encouraging fellowship among the Island Clubs".

Al Treble Reporting , June 1990



17th National Convention of the
United Church AOTS Men's Clubs
held University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, August 2 - 4 1991.



Lloyd Richards of Chatham, Ontario, was elected President. He is former President of his own club, of Conference AOTS Clubs, and served as Central Vice President before his election. He was employed with CO-OP Stores in Chatham.

At the Convention:

- The theme "Challenge to Commitment" was presented by Rev. Robert Duthie of Central United Church, Woodstock.
- Heard comments from a number of committees and Officers of decline in membership of AOTS Clubs and lack of support from the Division of Mission in Canada. This was also reflected in Conference President's reports.
- Heard report of declining membership in the United Church of Canada
- 1965: 1,064,033 1990: 808,441.
- Toronto Conference of United Church prepares covenant with Conference AOTS Council.
- Committee to study role of laity in the United Church and might consider these points suggested by clubs:
What are we doing about decline of membership?
Why stay with National AOTS?
Why not just a group of our own?
Where are we going?

David Sherwood Memorial Trophy goes to affiliated clubs showing the greatest percentage increase in paid up membership during a two year period. This Trophy was named in 1972 to honour the late David Sherwood who had been a National President, and one of the pioneers of AOTS in Ontario.



18th National Convention of the
United Church AOTS Men's Clubs
held at Trinity Western University, Langley, B C, Aug. 13-15, 1993



John Carswell of Burnaby, B C. was elected President. He is a Past President of his own South Burnaby Club and served on both Conference and National Executives of AOTS. He was Area Sales Manager for a Chewing Gum Company.

At the Convention :

- 70 years were celebrated with the theme "Celebrating Our Faith". Rev. Michael Ward, of Central United Church, Calgary, was theme speaker.
- Youth Ministry Project was launched and further consultation was to take place with the United Church General Council Youth Ministry.
- Reports from across the country still indicated difficulty to maintain clubs and create new ones.
- Lengthy discussions about detail of organization and the need to streamline.
- Division of Mission in Canada advises that \$5,000.00 budget amount is available for this year - but offer no guarantee for future.
- William H Bremner, a member of the staff of the Division of Mission challenges the members to develop a clear strategy for the future so that we can encourage other men's groups within the church to be a part of the national organization.

D R Poole Award, established in 1956, is presented bi-annually to the AOTS Club most active in the support of youth work in the community, and in the local church.



The 19th National Biennial Convention of the
United Church AOTS Mens' Clubs
held at the Ramada Inn, Belleville, Ontario, August 11- 13, 1995



Craig Watson of Sterling United Church AOTS Men's Club, Sterling, Ontario, was elected President. Craig had been Central Vice President and formerly President of Bay of Quinte Conference AOTS. He is an automobile salesman.

Some Convention action and highlights:

- 204 men were in attendance at this convention, and for many was a fond memory, and for others a new beginning.
- The weekend was a well planned, well organized event of learning, sharing, inspiration and fellowship.
- The theme "The Heart of AOTS" was presented by Rev. Jeff Dejong of Wellington United Church, Wellington, Ontario.
- There was lengthy discussions on future of AOTS, structure and organization, which resulted in a statement: "If AOTS is to survive and prosper as a National Christian United Church Men's movement, assuming we agree that men need the Church and that the Church needs men, changes are imperative. The question facing AOTS, you and me, is very basic: are we going to pull back, cutting expenses, having to make do with virtual handouts, or are we Pioneers for Christ with vision and a burning to take up the Cross for Christ and build a men's organization worth passing on to ours sons and grandsons."
- From this came the need for and the setting up of a Promotion and Publicity Committee.

"I shall always feel greatly indebted to the founders of A.O.T.S. They have inaugurated a movement that more closely embodies the spirit and teaching of Christ than any other movement that I know of."
Minister's quote.

"How any church gets along without an A.O.T.S. Club I do not know. There it is - always ready, keen and able to serve the church in any capacity. Service is its motto and it lives up to it."
Minister's quote.



20th National Convention of the
United Church AOTS Men's Clubs
held Hotel Gander Center, Gander, Newfoundland, August 1-3, 1997



Walter (Wally) an individual member of AOTS, and a member of Foothills United Church Men's Club in Calgary, was elected President. Wally had served as President of AOTS in Alberta Conference, Chairman of the Spiritual Life Committee and Western Vice President. He is a retired School Principal.

At the Convention:

- The theme of the Convention "Getting on the Lord's Agenda, was presented by Rev. Joseph Burton, Clarkes Beach, Nfld.
- Donald MacKenzie of Winnipeg was elected President-elect.
- Ken Lane ended his years as Executive Secretary and Jim Upright of Abbotsford B C began Jan. 1, 1998 as National Secretary.
- The Convention are sponsoring, as a National Project, "Youth to Camp" for youth ages 8-14 years.
- The PRESIDENT'S MAN award was created to honour the memory of the late Lorne Thornley in recognition of his long and outstanding service to AOTS Men's Clubs.
- 75th Anniversary celebrations of AOTS will be held at Ryerson United Church, Vancouver, August 14-16, 1998.
- The 21st National Biennial Convention of United Church AOTS Men's Clubs will be held at Geneva Park, Orillia, Ontario, April 30 to May 2nd, 1999. The very Rev. Bruce McLeod will be the featured theme speaker.

Historical Background

1955

Founded in 1955 The Ontario Round Up was the second AOTS Round Up in Canada. The Wildwood Inn on Sparrow

1996

Lake was its home for at least 3 years. The YMCA at Geneva Park Orillia Ont was home from about 1958 to the present date. Although some of the surviving programs count their anniversaries in the 60's, 1998 could be the 51st year. The attendance averaged was about two hundred men. A guestimate of the total attendance would be about 8,000 men who have celebrated their faith, fellowship and fraternity in His name and some of the best memories of their spiritual life.

THE PRESIDENTS

Who were they? Where did they come from?

National Association of AOTS Clubs Conventions

	1947 George C Skinner - Interim	Vancouver, B.C.
	1949 Charles E Achison	Vancouver, B.C.
1.	1952 G Brydon McCrae	Winnipeg, Man.
2.	1954 G Brydon McCrae - Re-elected	Winnipeg, Man.
3.	1956 David Sherwood	Scarborough, Ont..

National Association of United Church AOTS Men's Clubs Conventions

1.	1959 Charles C Burritt	Burnaby, B.C.
2.	1961 Fred D Saunderson	London, Ont..
3.	1963 Jack Dawson	Orangeville Ont..
4.	1965 Allan R Jones	Edmonton, AB
5.	1967 Lorne Thornley	Scarborough, Ont.
6.	1969 John C Cleave	Sarnia, Ont.
7.	1971 Douglas N Phillips	Toronto, Ont.
8.	1973 Dr. W G (Bill) Hastings	West Vancouver B.C.
9.	1975 Ken Lane	Burlington, Ont..
10.	1977 Dave Murphy Tom Ferguson	Charlottetown, PEI Trenton, NS
11.	1979 Dr. Murray McPherson	Winnipeg, Man.
12.	1981 Gordon Hall	Waterloo, Ont..
13.	1983 Cyril Locke	Springdale Nfld.
14.	1985 Jack Arthur	Belleville, Ont.
15.	1987 Ernest Stafford	Duncan, B.C.
16.	1989 Robert Lewis	Amherstburg, Ont..
17.	1991 Lloyd Richards	Chatham, Ont..
18.	1993 John Carswell	Burnaby, B.C.
19.	1995 Craig Watson	Belleville, Ont.
20.	1997 Walter Shoults	Calgary, AB

- Re: 1977 - Dave Murphy suffered a heart attack and was unable to carry on. Tom Ferguson completed his term.
- 1958 - an interim committee under Arthur Blair of Simcoe, Ont.. was set up by the Board of Men to bring about the transition to the National Association of United Church AOTS Men's Clubs.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES

D.R. Poole		1946-1956
Phil Spence		1956-1970
Don Smith	x	1970-1976
Phil Spence		1976-1978
Al Smith		1978-1982
Jack Cleave		1983-1987
Robert Lewis		1987-1989
Al Smith		1989-1991
Ken Lane		1992-1997
Jim Upright	xx	1998-

x Don Smith became an Associate Secretary of the Division of Mission in Canada in 1971 and as the only person left on staff, became the Executive Secretary of the National Association of United Church AOTS Men's Clubs. This was required according to the constitution of the National Association.

xx The name of the position was changed to National Secretary.

AOTS CLUBS AFFILIATED WITH NATIONAL

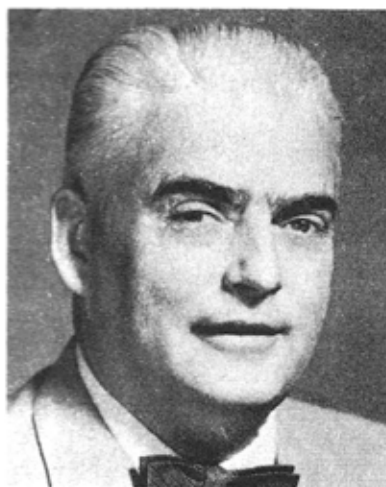
<u>Conference</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1994</u>	<u>May 1998</u>
British Columbia	73	32	10	6	6
Alberta	40	10	4	4	4
Saskatchewan	57	16	5	3	4
Manitoba	33	13	5	6	6
Manitou		7	4	5	5
London	30	14	9	14	14
Hamilton	46	12	3	2	2
Toronto	67	24	3	5	6
Bay of Quinte	28	17	10	15	17
Montreal & Ottawa	29	6	1	0	1
Maritimes	63	50	3	4	5
Newfoundland	11	13	11	9	8
Totals	477	214	68	73	78

Changes in Staff - both at National Office and in the Field began in 1968 and the last meeting of the Executive of the Board of Men was held December 11, 1971.

Full Time Staff of National AOTS Clubs



D R Poole
1946-1956



Phil Spence
1956-1970

Full Time Staff of Board of Men



Ralph Young
1951-1961



Ralph Wilson
1955-1969



Fred Holberton
1959-1971



Allison MacKinnon
1961-1971



Don Cameron
1961-1964



Don Smith
1965-1978