

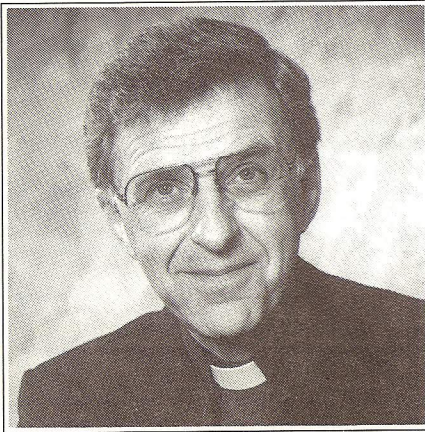
# The Handshake

ISSUE NO. 10

NATIONAL EDITION

FEBRUARY, 1989

## Mount Allison University Sackville New Brunswick Hosts 16th Biennial A.O.T.S. Convention July 7-10, 1989



Guest Speaker — Rev. Robert A. Crooks

The theme speaker will be Rev. Robert A. Crooks who will be speaking on "The Christ of the Crest." It will be delivered in three parts "Savior, Light and Servant."

Rev. Crooks was born and raised in Sydney, Nova Scotia. He took a music degree from McGill University, became organist and choir director at United Baptist Church in Charlettetown, P.E.I. where he taught in private and public schools.

Hearing a call to the Ministry he studied at Prince of Wales College, Charlettetown, Dalhousie University and Pine Hill Divinity in Halifax. Rev. Crooks was ordained in 1958 and served in churches in P.E.I., Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. He is currently Senior Minister at Woodroffe United Church in Ottawa.

Rev. Crooks is married with four children.

## President's Report

During November my attendance at the National Executive meeting was followed by a visit to Tilbury, Ont. and attendance at the Tri-County AOTS Mens Clubs Fall Rally which was an experience of Fellowship and Spiritual influence far beyond my expectations. The humor and true enthusiasm of all the men encouraged me tremendously. My thanks to Lloyd Richards and all those who helped plan and arrange the tour of South Western Ontario that included seeing the Windsor University, site of the 1991 Convention, and invitation to participate in a Lay Sunday Service at Harrow United Church and a visit to Thamesview United for the 30th Anniversary of AOTS in that church, truly an inspirational time amongst AOTS members and new found friends, never to be forgotten.

Since returning to B.C., during November and December there have been visits to clubs at Duncan, Chemainus/Ladysmith and South Burnaby where I installed new Officers and participated in the Sunday service. Correspondence is always a priority and time consuming, however I was able to enjoy a full holiday season with my family and may I take this opportunity to thank all who sent cards of good wishes for Christmas and the New Year. Because of some health problems during December and January, I curtailed some activities, thankfully I am now,

according to my doctors, in good health, and I feel that way, so it is business as usual, with God's help and guidance.

However, I did miss the National Executive Meeting, January 28th, but Lloyd Richards, our Central Vice President ably conducted the meeting and I know from discussions with our Executive Director that AOTS is active as ever despite the hurt caused by "the issue" and problems within the United Church. In the past AOTS has overcome problems when doldrums bothered us and we have even weathered the storms when we were growing. I am confident that men of AOTS will unite as always to promote our Association for the benefit of all men and God's Church.

Other functions I shall try to attend will include B.C. and Alberta Roundups in March, participate in AOTS Sunday at South Burnaby, install Officers at Brechin United, Nanaimo and plans are underway for a visit to New Brunswick to meet with our Eastern Vice President and the planning committee for the National Executive meeting on April 8th.

It has been and still is, my privilege and pleasure to be

*AS ONE THAT SERVES*  
Ernest Stafford.

*Service is a gift of love to people, given in gratitude for God's gift of Love to you.*

## Moderator Acknowledges AOTS Resolution

Under his greeting and salutation "Dear Friends" the concerns your executive expressed have been lumped together with many other letters etc. re this problem. We can only assume that there was a heavy correspondence to preclude a one on one reply. We commend a letter that an Ontario newspaper carried written by Bob Lewis.

## Can You Assist?

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# National Convention News

## Maritime Men to Host the 1989 A.O.T.S. Convention

It is with a great deal of enthusiasm the men and women in the Maritimes are planning this exciting event.

Great detail has and is going into every phase so that all attending will enjoy the meetings and will recognize the REAL EASTCOASTHOSPITALITY. They are expecting men from all across Canada and a representation from Bermuda. Many are bringing their family so that all will enjoy this exciting time.

This convention offers something for everyone with theme talks, lots of singing, story tellers, workshops, time for business and a Saturday evening banquet and entertainment, when all will come to know the true meaning of "Maritime Hospitality." Under chairman Robert Heaney, the P.E.I. men are promising "Something Special."

Rev. Bruce Roberts will act as chaplain and will lead worship in the chapel on

Saturday and Sunday mornings. Many of us have come to regard worship in the Mount Allison Chapel as the highlight of any event we attend on this beautiful campus.

Don Hell will lead us in our singing and Kirby Knowian will be our soloist. Don is a music teacher in the Dartmouth school system and led the singing in our 1988 Men's Festival. Kirby is a very talented individual who is equally comfortable serving the Lord through singing, playing the organ or piano, or speaking. He has been in the lay ministry for many years.

Dow Price is in charge of Workshops/ Interest groups and will cover such topics as; the Holy Spirit, Family Life, Prayer, Techniques of Bible Study, Inner Healing, Christianity in Business, Loneliness, and the Successful A.O.T.S. Club. Each of these will be presented twice on Satur-

day, thus everyone will have an opportunity to attend two.

Time for A.O.T.S. business has been scheduled on Friday and Saturday, and during those times other activities are scheduled for the family members. Vera Proud and Marjorie Price have this program, well in hand. Thanks Vera and Marjorie.

While the convention is sponsored by the A.O.T.S. it is not limited to members but to all men and their families. We of course hope that men will catch the spirit and want to join after this event.

Ralph Sams inquires how many Council Members will be attending the council meeting on Thursday, July 6th. Will the council members please let Ralph know? The address is:

Mr. Ralph Sams  
61 Woodlawn Road,  
Dartmouth, N.S.

## A.O.T.S. In Newfoundland

Here in Newfoundland the A.O.T.S. fires are still burning, and many and varied are the projects and programs which are being carried out on a regular basis from Carol United Club in Labrador City, to St. James Club in the city of St. John's, as well as throughout the Conference.

During 1988 two weekend Men's Retreats were held — one, the last weekend in May in the Humber Presbytery

with sixty men in attendance, and another in the Terra Nova Presbytery in September with 110 men present, each yielding an abundance of spiritual and social blessings which would be difficult to describe, but nevertheless rich in content, and rewarding in spiritual compensation.

An all Nfld. and Labrador Conference Roundup is being prepared for 1989 which will take place at the Loon Bay Christian

Centre September 22-24th. The Theme will be "Discipline — Challenge of the 90's" and will be addressed by Dr. David Winsor of Leaside United church in Toronto. Two hundred men are expected to attend. This will be the first Conference Roundup of men in this area, and great will be the fellowship when men from all over the Conference from Labrador City in the North to St. John's in the South stand to sing "In Christ there is no South or North but one great fellowship of love throughout the whole round earth."

Handshake will hear from us again following this event. Pray for us in this venture — pray for us from Vancouver Island to Halifax, that a great revival of A.O.T.S. interest will be rekindled here in this bastion of A.O.T.S.

—Cyril Locke,  
Nfld. & Lab. Conference  
A.O.T.S. Contact person

## Music the Staff of Whites Life

Lorne and Mary White will share their faith journey in song at the convention.

A native of Halifax, White, the son of a Baptist Minister has been singing as long as he can remember. His mother, a trained singer, and at one time he and his 12 brothers and sister were part of his fathers choir at Cornwallis Street Baptist Church.

Although he is not a trained singer he fills his hours singing, either as a member of the White Family Singers or performing solo. He has put out a solo album in 1985 WORDS OF LOVE and last year the family recorded an album THE WHITE FAMILY PRAISE THE LORD.

The White Family Singers made up of Lorne and his wife Mary, their three children Holly Roddam, Shelly Price and Lee White and his sister Yvonne have been together four and a half years performing

in churches, concerts, benefits and other gatherings. "We even sang in a family reunion in Virginia so I guess that makes us international performers" said White with a smile.

For White his music is more than a form of entertainment.

"I get an inner peace from the knowledge that I am doing what God expects me to do with what he has given me. I get a sense that my music does effect people. I get letters and phone calls from people who say you'll never know what your music has done for me." He enjoys serving God in this way.

In June 1985 he retired from his position as Bloomfield vice-principal after 14 years and now he says he will devote more time to singing.

We look forward to enjoying the singing of these talented people.

### THE EDITORS:

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# Good News! You don't have to leave the United Church

By R.A. Lewis, Executive Director, AOTS United Church Men's Clubs

Now that the 32nd General Council is over, we can study what was actually approved with respect to sexual orientation proposals. The overriding conclusion has been that the result of the session was actually quite different than what you might have heard or read. Naturally, any written report is subject to many interpretations, probably as many interpretations as there are readers, but some points were clearly made, while others were obscured in purposely vague language. When you think of it "in the cool of the night", or place yourselves in the position of the commissioners, you will likely conclude that the only reasonable course of action would be to give as much comfort as possible to the losers (the gays) in the situation. If General Council came down squarely on the side of the majority — some 1,200 congregations — and clearly reprimanded the minority, then it would be said that the United Church is no longer a conciliatory Church, and indeed could be labeled as fundamentalist. It is, however, United Church policy to encompass all lifestyles, whether it relate to sexual, business, poverty or whatever, and to maintain meaningful dialogue in an effort to bring all people to a loving relationship with Jesus Christ, without leaving room for an accusation that we are narrow in vision and have exclusive access to right answers. We are a Church that is constantly seeking to have a better understanding of God's intention for us, and that must include a continual review of

our past actions and policies. We have done just that.

It has been stated many times that we are in a no win situation and that is most assuredly true. It is clear the gays wanted the Church to endorse their lifestyle — but we couldn't do that, for two main reasons at least. First there was overwhelming objection by members and congregations to such approval. Second, the lengthy report "Toward a Christian Understanding of Sexual Orientation Lifestyle and Ministry" required 118 pages in its attempt to lead membership to the conclusion that "sexual orientation is like being left handed or right handed or ambidextrous" and failed miserably at convincing the majority of that value system. But on the other side of the issue many wanted to come down hard on the gays and leave no doubt that theirs was an unacceptable position. This position wisely was not taken by General Council, as to do so would be to alienate that group from our Church and cut off the possibility of reconciliation.

If one takes the time to read what was approved, two important matters will emerge. The motion contains no recommendations about homosexual acts, and the like. Therefore it cannot be said that the approved motion endorses gay activities. Many reports of the Council actions suggest otherwise, but they are incorrect. Secondly, and most importantly, the approved report underlines the value of ALL people as being part of God's community

and that the value of all contributions to His plan should be recognized.

The natural conclusion that one must now draw from all the fuss and furore over the sexual orientation report is that the subject has been widely debated and now is behind us. There were no clear winners, and now we must get back to our real task of building a better world in the name of Jesus Christ.

(The following direct quotations from the approved motion are fundamental in these notes:

"We confess our inability at this time, given our diversity in our understanding of the authority and interpretation of Scripture, to find consensus regarding a Christian understanding of human sexuality including homosexuality."

"That all persons regardless of their sexual orientation, who profess faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to Him, are welcome to be or become full members of the United Church of Canada."

"That the report "Toward a Christian Understanding of Sexual Orientation Lifestyles and Ministry" does not reflect the present position of the United Church of Canada therefore this report ought to be considered an historic document and the decisions of the 32nd General Council be circulated for study and reflection in our struggle to find God's direction in these matters for our Church."

—NATIONAL TREASURER  
Robert A. Lewis

## From The Book of Habakkuk

The sovereignty of God and the need for man to trust Him is the basic message of this marvelous book. God is in control of all nations and will do what is right. The proper attitude of man is trust, not doubt (2:4). When a man does this, he may look beyond the unpleasant exterior of things into the deeper meaning of God and find strength to live no matter what might happen. We do not know the future but God does and he may be fully trusted. THIS IS SO TODAY ALSO. LET US TRUST GOD.

—Your Editor

## Birthday Party

For the 45th time the Vancouver and Lower Mainland AOTS District Council celebrated Christ's birthday with song, fellowship and food. This luncheon was held in Collingwood United and each brought a gift of socks or shorts for the more needy in the area of First United. A great time of fellowship. —Bill Hastings

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## Time for Executive Nomination

Now is the time for to give your attention to the nomination of National executive. Give this your thought and prayer that we again have a strong executive leading the A.O.T.S. for the following two years.

See the following notes:

1. Send to - Al Smith, 61 Nordin Ave., Etobicoke, Ont. M8Z 2B4
2. If extra forms are needed please copy.
3. Please include a short biography of the nominee.
4. Please return by March 1, 1989.
5. The back of this form may be used for comments.

