

FINDING AID

Administrative Records of the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Fonds

Series 506/2 District Council AOTS (As One That Serves)

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United Church of Canada Archives

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500 Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference fonds. -- 1917 - 2004; predominant 1954-1993. -- 43m of textual records and other material.

The Conference of Manitoba came into existence in June of 1925 with the creation of The United Church of Canada through the union of the Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational and Local Union Churches of Canada. The name was changed in 1980 to the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario as a result of a successful petition to the General Council of the United Church by Cambrian Presbytery. The Conference encompasses the entire province of Manitoba and the area of Northwestern Ontario drained by the Rainy River and Winnipeg River systems as far east as Marathon, Ontario and south to the United States border.

The Conference has an administrative as well as a geographic meaning. The thirteen conferences within The United Church of Canada function as a governing body or court of the church. Very simply, they are composed of members of the Order of Ministry on the roll of Presbyteries within the geographical bounds of the Conference and lay persons under appointment to administrative or staff positions within the Conference by a court of the church or the United Church General Council. These are matched by an equal number of lay representatives elected from the Pastoral Charges within the Conference. Chairpersons of Conference Committees and the President of the Conference United Church Women are also members of Conference. In addition to the obligation to meet annually and to appoint a Conference Executive, the Conference was charged with appointing Standing and Special Committees to carry out the day to day work of the Conference. In 1925 these were Education and Students, Evangelism and Social Service, Foreign Missions, Home Missions, Pensions, Publications, Religious Education, Missionary and Maintenance Fund, Church Property, Settlement, Statistics, Historical and Obituaries.

With a few exceptions, the structure of Conference remained essentially the same until 1972 when a major realignment of the administrative structure of the United Church at the General Council (National) and Conference levels took place. In 1972, the Boards of Home Missions, Evangelism and Social Service and Christian Education had ceased to exist along with the staff positions associated with that work. New paid staff positions which made their first appearance around this time were Regional Director of Broadcasting in 1971 (lasting only until 1972), the positions of Conference Personnel and Conference Administrative Support in 1972 and the positions of Leadership Development and Program Resource in 1973. In 1975 and 1976, and again from 1989 to 1993, a staff position for Communications was added. In 1983, the Conference staff position of Christian Development and Outreach was created and, in 1986, an Evangelism and Social Action staff person as well as a full time Conference Archivist was hired.

The changes in National and Conference administrative structure, which resulted from a move towards more regional and local control of church programs, were reflected in the evolution of Conference Committees. The powerful Conference Home Missions Committee and its sub-committees, responsible for overseeing the mission initiatives of Conference and the administration of mission grants according to Board of Home Missions directives, had been replaced by the Administrative Support Committee (briefly called the Congregational Support Committee) by 1973. Another major reorganisation of the Conference committee structure took place in 1983 when a system for the division of the work of Conference committees among four Councils (Stewardship, Worship and Education, Ministry and Personnel, Evangelism and Social Action) was devised. Committee chairs reported to their respective Councils that in turn were represented on the Conference Executive.

Another major reorganisation of Conference Structure took place in 1993. At that time, the pressure of meeting current demands with dwindling resources resulted in a move to reduce the number of Presbyteries from eight to six. The work previously allocated among four Conference Councils was then divided between three Program Units (Education and Justice, Ministry and Personnel, and Stewardship and Mission). The number of Committees reporting to the Program Units, and through them to the Conference Executive was reduced. Salaried staff were also decreased and reorganised to include the positions of Executive Secretary, Education and Justice staff person, Stewardship and Mission staff

person, Personnel staff person and Conference Archivist. Further changes to the Conference Structure were made in 2005.

Many of the materials which make up this Conference fonds had been stored in the basement of the Conference administrative offices at 120 Maryland Street in Winnipeg in an ad hoc manner for varying lengths of time over a period of approximately forty years before coming into the Archives. Generally, the records of Conference executive, staff and committee chairs were transferred to the basement at the end of their term of office. Renovations to and rearrangement of the basement area resulted in the movement of the materials around the storage area on more than one occasion. It is probable that space constraints resulted in the unrecorded disposal of an undetermined number of documents and other materials throughout the storage period. Administrative records in storage at 120 Maryland were formally transferred to the Archives in 1989. The movement of the Conference administrative offices to a new address in the fall of 1996 precipitated an inventory and the relocation of those records in 1995 prior to the move. The balance of the fonds consists of record series that had been accessioned by the Archives at various periods prior to 1995. The provenance of records accessioned prior to 1976 is often obscure.

The fonds consists of textual and other materials generated by the Conference, the Conference Executive, Conference Staff Associates and Conference Committee members in the fulfilment of their mandate as outlined in *The Manual of The United Church of Canada* from 1925 to 1994. Throughout the life of the fonds, several Conference staff members have served in more than one church or community administration simultaneously while keeping unified files. This has resulted in materials from other administrative jurisdictions being interspersed among the fonds.

Fonds are composed of the following series: Conference Annual Meetings, 1925-1993; Conference Executive, 1925-2002; Conference Offices, 1958-1989; Committees, Task Forces and Working Groups Answering to the Executive and Sub-Executive, 1968-1993; Manitoba Conference Branch of The United Church Woman's Missionary Society, 1918-1962; Manitoba Conference Branch Woman's Missionary Society Archives Collection, [ca.1885-ca.1960]; Manitoba Conference Lay Association, [ca.1910]-1962; District Council AOTS, 1964-1977; Conference Committee on Christian Education, 1927-1992; Conference Home Missions Committee, 1926-1973; Superintendents of Home Missions, 1926-1973; records of the Administration of Norway House Residential School, 1954-1967; Conference Hospitals, 1923-1982; Home Missions Inter-Conference and Ecumenical Groups, 1956-1969; Conference Evangelism and Social Service Committee, 1933-1976; Conference Congregational Life and Work, 1952-1979; Church in Society Committee, 1976-1983; Evangelsim and Social Action Council, 1983-1993; Inter-Conference and Ecumenical Groups reporting to the Evangelsim and Social Action Council, 1972-1999; Conference Communications, 1964-1992; Worship and Education Council, 1981-1994; Worship and Education Council Women's Groups, 1982-1992; Education and Justice Unit, 1987 - 2004 (predominately 1993 - 1998); Committee on Education, Students and Church Vocations, 1975-1978; Conference Education Committee, 1972-1983; [Interim] Placement Committee, 1970-1972; Conference Settlement Committee, 1971-1980; Conference Staff Committee, 1966-1992; Ministry and Personnel Council, 1982-1993; Conference Personnel Officer, 1972-1993; Conference Personnel Records, 1957-1993; records of the Conference Finance Committee, 1964-1974; records of Conference Administrative Support, 1973-1983; records of Administrative Support Staff, 1972-1993; Conference Stewardship, 1967-1993; Church Camps, 1918-1975; Church Home for Girls, 1945-1976; Women's Union, 1926-1958; Manitoba Conference Woman's Association, 1946-1962; Conference United Church Women, 1963-2002; Fellowship of Professional Women, 1949-1980; Manitoba Canadian Girls in Training, 1918-1990; and the Manitoba Student Christian Movement, 1923-1981.

Title based on contents of fonds.

The fonds also includes ephemera, photographs, slides, audio tape recordings, video tape recordings and 50 sets of blueprints, plans and architects' drawings.

Original order of many of the series of the fonds was substantially obscured during the storage period and many materials were in an extremely disorganised state with no original order or access points apparent; where necessary, order based on administrative function has been reconstructed by the arranging archivist.

Some restrictions on access; see series descriptions.

Finding Aids consist of series descriptions and box lists; some sub-series and file level description available.

Further accruals are expected.

506/2 Manitoba District Council of AOTS Men's Clubs. – 1947-1996. – 20 cm textual records.

The AOTS (As One That Serves) movement was an ecumenical movement founded in 1923 by Doctor Hubert Wilkinson Riggs, a prominent member of the Kiwanis Club in Vancouver and a member of the Methodist Church. He felt that churches were losing manpower to secular service clubs and sought to reverse this trend and harness valuable resources by organising men's service clubs in churches. Eventually District Councils were organised as a means whereby local clubs could co-operate. A President, Vice-President, Secretary and one Councillor from each AOTS Club in the area were automatically members of the Council. A special sub-committee of Conference Christian Education Committee introduced AOTS to Manitoba in 1948. It was welcomed by the Conference Lay Association, which endorsed the formation of clubs. A Manitoba Council Executive of AOTS was formed in 1949 and participated in a joint Conference with the Conference Lay Association. A motion of mutual co-operation was endorsed. By 1950, Manitoba Conference Laymen were encouraging the United Church General Council to approve AOTS as the official organisation for men's work in the Church. In 1955, a Western Manitoba Council with clubs in Brandon, Minnedosa, Russell and Gladstone was formed.

AOTS Clubs especially supported boys and youth programs. By 1952, AOTS District Council supplied two representatives to the Advisory Board of the Student Christian Movement. The District Council took over sponsorship of the Winnipeg Presbytery Basketball League and the Stella Avenue Mission Team. This led to the creation of a Sunday School Athletic League. The AOTS District council supplied a representative to the Conference Committee on Tyro Boys Work. Other club activities included Theatre Night, Rallies and recruitment for the ministry.

In 1952, the National AOTS Council adopted a Constitution whereby AOTS became a Department of the National Committee of United Church Men and the United Church General Council endorsed AOTS as the official Service Club movement within the Church. Later, the national Board of Men acted as a co-ordinating body for UCM groups and AOTS clubs. With the creation of Congregational Life and Work, UCM ceased to exist as a separate body nationally in 1965 and at the Conference level in 1969. However, AOTS continues as a Service Club movement within the United Church and the Manitoba Council of AOTS continues to function.

The records of the Manitoba Council AOTS housed at the conference archives include: publications ; Records of Proceedings for National Convention, 1952, 1981,1985, 1989; minutes and correspondence, 1947-1953,1990-1996; records of the Windsor Park AOTS, 1990-1992; financial records, 1990-1996; list of Charters, 1947-1951; records of the Gladstone AOTS, 1952-1953; and records of the St. Paul's United Church AOTS, 1951-1952.

Title based on contents.

Other records of the Manitoba Council AOTS may be found with the records of the National Association of United Church AOTS Men's Clubs fonds in the collection of the General Council Archives of The United Church of Canada.

Accession: 1996-21; 2010-8.

Location: Box 506/1-1; 545 (Off-Site Box 00542)

Box Lists

Box 506/1-1

Records of Conference Men's Groups. Manitoba Council AOTS/UCM.

Accession 89-21

- Miscellaneous material. – 1964-1977. – 1 folder.

Box 545 (Off Site 00542)

AOTS

- Manitoba District Council Publications
- Records of Proceedings for National Convention 1952,1981, 1985, 1989
- Manitoba District Council Minutes and Correspondence 1947
- Manitoba District Council Minutes and Correspondence 1948
- Manitoba District Council Minutes and Correspondence 1949
- Manitoba District Council Minutes and Correspondence 1950
- Manitoba District Council Windsor Park Membership Lists 1990-1992
- Manitoba District Council Minutes (includes notices and financial statements) 1993-1994
- Manitoba District Council Minutes and Financial Reports 1995-1996
- Manitoba District Council Minutes (includes financial records and some correspondence 1990-1992
- Manitoba District Council Minutes List of Charters Received and Issued 1947-1951
- Manitoba District Council Minutes 1950-1951
- Manitoba District Council Correspondence re: Programming 1951-1953
- Manitoba District Council Financial Records 1950-1954
- Manitoba District Council "On The Job" Newsletter 1949-1953
- Manitoba District Council "The Handshake" 1948, 1990-1995
- Manitoba District Council Correspondence 1953-1955
- Manitoba District Council Gladstone Programme 1952-1953
- Manitoba District Council St. Paul's United Church Newsletters and Membership List 1951-1952