

**Executive Secretary Report to
Toronto Conference Executive
June 9, 2010**

This report covers the period from mid-April to the beginning of June, 2010, and includes up-dates on items mentioned in previous reports to the Executive.

General preamble: From p. 13 of the Toronto Conference Executive policy *Handbook*:

The Executive monitors the Executive Secretary regularly and rigorously but only against established policies.

- Are the Ends being met?
- Are the Executive Secretary Limitations being followed?

This report describes how the executive secretary is ensuring that the Ends policies are being met and how the Executive Secretary Limitations policies are being followed.

The Executive is responsible for monitoring how it is adhering to all other policies, i.e. Executive/Staff Relations and Executive Governance policies.

Executive members will need to follow the *Handbook* policy by policy to understand the comments which follow, since the comments relate directly to whether the executive secretary is in compliance with the direction given by the Executive through its policies. The executive secretary will indicate whether he is in compliance with the policies, what actions have taken place, and what actions need to be taken. The Executive will assess whether items have been missed, or whether actions taken have been acceptable.

Items marked with an asterisk (*) contain a request for discussion and/or action.

Mission/Ends policies

p. 19 – mission of Toronto Conference – generally in compliance

- Strengthening... to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ – in compliance;
 - a) Mission & Service Fund - In my last two reports I described the work that Jody Maltby is doing regarding long-term strategies for the Mission & Service Fund within Toronto Conference. Those plans need to be re-thought and revised in light of the General Council Executive's plan to establish additional financial vehicles. The General Council initiatives can be found at http://www.united-church.ca/files/communications/news/general/100503_motion.pdf.
 - b) accessibility standards – Kerrie Perry has been working with staff from other Conferences and the General Council office to help inform congregations about provincial accessibility standards. They are jointly preparing materials which can be adapted to the needs of the particular Conferences. Information on this will be

posted on the website on a regular basis. Some of the early material can be found at <http://www.torontoconference.ca/downloads/provincial-accessibility-guidelines.pdf>.

* c) annual meeting - The annual meeting was held at St. Paul's United Church in Orillia May 28-30. Last fall the Executive had laid out its values for the planning of the meeting. Then-President Carol Gierak, then President-elect Marg Walker and I were the primary planners. The three of us are requesting that the Executive evaluate the meeting in preparation for planning the 2011 annual meeting. Results of the evaluations of attendees will be forwarded to the Executive. The planning values are included in the packet of material for this meeting (see p. 11).

- Best use of human and financial resources – generally in compliance;
 - a) staffing conversations - By June 8 I will have completed my visits to all Presbyteries to have a conversation regarding staff roles and plans for the upcoming year. At the time of writing this report, I have met with the appropriate bodies within South West, Northern Waters and Living Waters Presbyteries. These conversations were greatly aided by the Conference Executive's action to require a mission strategy from each Presbytery (when there are discussions about money received from the sale of some church property). To date there has been general agreement that a mission strategy will inform future priorities for staff. In addition, a mission strategy could suggest some changes to Presbytery structures.

Following each meeting with Presbytery people, I have worked with the staff to develop a work plan for 2010-2011. These plans will be shared with the Presbyteries for information or for further discussion and/or decision-making by the Presbytery.
 - b) licensing agreement – For a number of years the Conference has made arrangements for a licensing agreement available to all congregations. The license runs April 1-March 31 and has been renewed. The cost to the Conference in 2009 was \$1,147; this will be reviewed by Rose Cambourne to see whether other financial arrangements can be made so that the program is cost neutral. See <http://www.torontoconference.ca/downloads/video-license-letter-2010.pdf>.
 - c) minute-taking document – In consultation with the staff and the chairs and secretaries of the Presbyteries, I developed a document on consistency of minute-taking within the Conference and the four Presbyteries. Patti Rodgers of Living Waters Presbytery conducted a minute-taking workshop which may become a template for other workshops in other Presbyteries.

- Oversight and compliance – generally in compliance
 - a) Sexual abuse policy – The training session on May 15 was a very worthwhile event. The training was led primarily by Kathy McDonald, legal counsel at the General Council office. Our consultants now have a clear sense of their roles

under the 2007 policy. Unfortunately, we did not have a full complement of persons appointed by Presbyteries to be officers of the Court and co-chairs of the committee (two from each Presbytery). This will require further individual training when the Presbyteries make these appointments. What they will have missed was a great deal of useful conversation about how to implement the policy.

The personnel ministers have set 2010-2011 dates for four sexual abuse policy workshops for Ministry Personnel. That information will be on the website by the end of June.

b) racial justice training – Four racial justice training events will be held in a variety of places within the Conference. The first took place at Annesley United Church in early May. To date, the other three sessions have not been scheduled, which is raising some frustration levels. I continue to contact the trainers to determine future dates, so far without luck.

c) duty of care – Susan Howard, former Conference staff, will conduct the duty of care training sessions at the Conference camps on the July 1 holiday weekend. She will be accompanied by Anne McRae and/or Helen Prior, both of whom attended the May 15 workshop on the sexual abuse policy. Sue will work with Anne and Helen so they can learn what needs to be done at each camp. The plan/hope is that they would then take over the training in subsequent years.

- Providing resources – generally in compliance;

a) staff news – i) The full staff attended a first aid training session conducted by St. John's Ambulance. All staff are now qualified to be first aid responders, which sounds more confident than most of us feel! Defibrillators will be installed in all offices, likely over the summer. ii) The staff will be on a retreat June 21-23 at the Five Oaks Centre. This is a further opportunity to build a staff team which can make the best use of the resources that are available. iii) We are now at the stage where staff are starting to see how their skills can be used in complementary ways throughout the Conference, e.g. one personnel minister will conduct a workshop on the sexual abuse policy in a Presbytery where s/he is not deployed, while in exchange another personnel minister will conduct a workshop for Ministry & Personnel Committees.

b) Presbytery finances – Living Waters and Northern Waters Presbyteries have appreciated the extra \$15,000 of funding available to them. To date, I have not taken action on the longer-term financial arrangements, as directed at the April Executive meeting. I will report on this at the November Executive meeting.

c) meetings with Presbytery chairs and secretaries – The president, president-elect and I met with Presbytery chairs and secretaries on April 29. This meeting was well attended and seemed to be appreciated. One of the outcomes was the

development of a protocol for informing Presbytery chairs and secretaries when potentially sensitive information has come to light.

p. 20 – compliance

- Compliance with General Council and other policies - generally in compliance; see my notes, above, on the sexual abuse and racial justice policies

p. 21 – oversight: Presbyteries

- Reports from Presbyteries – in compliance; reports were received from all four Presbyteries and were posted on the website
- Oversight visits – in compliance; at this meeting the Executive will receive a draft plan for these visits
- Review of records – in compliance; Mary Gooley has agreed to review the minutes of the new Presbyteries
- Communication – in compliance
- Finances – in compliance

p. 22 – oversight: Incorporated Ministries

- generally in compliance; minutes are being received, boards approved, permissions given as necessary, etc.; the Executive will discuss this topic at this meeting

p. 24 – interview committee

- in compliance
- Presbyteries are working on their complement of 10 persons for the 2010-2011 year

p. 25 – settlement and pastoral relations committee

- generally in compliance; the vice-chair and the secretary are the same person; the nominations group of the Executive will address this matter

p. ? – learning funds (policy adopted in April; new page to be added to *Handbook*)

- not in compliance; to date I have not written the terms of reference or advertised the availability of the funds; I hope to do this in June.

p. ? – disposition of property (policy adopted in April; new page to be added to *Handbook*)

- in compliance; Rose Cambourne and I will meet on June 17 with an agent authorized by WoodGreen Red Door Family Shelter to discuss the potential sale of the property to the shelter.

* p. ? – Conference Fund (policy adopted in April; new page to be added to *Handbook*)

- not in compliance; the Fund has not been set up yet, pending Rose Cambourne's meeting with the auditors; a request has already come in regarding support to United Church educational institutions; the Executive may wish to develop criteria for responding to such requests

p. ? – communication (policy adopted in April; new page to be added to *Handbook*)

- generally in compliance;
- a) *Insight* - In earlier reports I said that *Insight* will continue to be published in *The United Church Observer*, and that I had plans to be in touch with Presbytery communication teams regarding content. This has been a lower priority but will be part of the re-design of *Insight* which I hope will be completed over the summer, depending on time being available to complete this task.
b) *Directory* - I reported in April that the non-publication of the *Directory* was a disappointment and an embarrassment. Shortly following that meeting, Rose Cambourne and the photo company were able to move things forward, and the book was available at the annual meeting. The photo directory was intended to be an aid for Presbyteries to get to know one another and to include material specific to each Presbytery. The lengthy delay frustrated that hope. Future directories will be produced by individual Presbyteries on timelines more useful to them.

Executive Secretary Limitations Policies

* p. 29 – general constraints

- in compliance
- #5 – In April the Executive issued a statement on the province's sex education program. I am asking the Executive to discuss how it wishes to handle issues like this in the future. This also relates to the Executive's policy on making public statements, p. 65.

p. 30 – budgeting

- in compliance

p. 31 – overall financial policy

- in compliance; the Conference's auditor has been informed that this policy exists

p. 32 – protection of assets

- in compliance; the executive secretary meets with the finance and property administrator on a regular basis; the Conference's auditor has been informed that this policy exists

p. 33 – cash management

- cash available – in compliance
- four months of expenses – Rose Cambourne has set up a meeting with the auditor to ensure that all Decisions made at the April 14, 2010 Executive meeting will be implemented properly, from an accounting point of view. Funds will be allocated accordingly.

p. 34 – signing officers

- in compliance

p. 35 – investment policy

- not in compliance; at the moment the Conference's investments are found at Toronto United Church Council (Cedar Glen Fund), GICs and cash; see my comments, above, on cash management; over the summer, Rose Cambourne and I will deal with these matters and will report to the Executive in September

p. 36 – vendor relations

- in compliance; there have been no extraordinary post-April purchases of more than \$5,000 and no new vendors who required scrutiny

p. 37 – revenues/assessments

- in compliance; Rose Cambourne has informed the Presbyteries regarding congregations which are in arrears; Presbyteries have been following up on those concerns
- as of mid-May, the following amounts were still outstanding from the 2009 assessments
 - Living Waters - \$14,066.30
 - Northern Waters - \$1,000
 - South West - \$10,838.90
 - Toronto Southeast - \$3,411.25

p. 38 – Presbytery finances

- generally in compliance; Rose Cambourne will provide up-dated wording in the section on general expenses and Presbytery treasurer; this policy is scheduled for review in 2011-2012; revisions will include changes suggested by Presbytery treasurers