

**Executive Secretary Report to
Toronto Conference Executive
November 3, 2010**

This report covers the period from September 1 to November 3, 2010, and includes up-dates on items mentioned in previous reports to the Executive.

General preamble: From p. 1-6 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.

Business from the minutes

2012 annual meeting venue: See Executive minutes p. 10/11-4. I had planned to have a recommendation regarding the location of the 2012 annual meeting but have not progressed far enough to do so at this meeting. This will be on the February or April Executive agenda.

Mission/Ends policies

p. 2-3 – mission of Toronto Conference – generally in compliance

- Strengthening... to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ – in compliance;
 - a) mission support consultation – The annual mission support consultation took place on November 2. A report is included in the material for this meeting, and a motion to approve the recommendations is found in the omnibus motion. The

group was working with a 10% reduction in funds from the General Council, and Toronto United Church Council was unable to provide funds as they have for a number of years.

b) annual meeting planning – i) The meeting is now confirmed for St. Paul's United Church in Orillia. ii) Planning meetings were held September 22 and November 2, and a further meeting is scheduled for November 30. The theme will focus on aspects of leadership; the November 30 meeting should produce a definite theme phrase. iii) Information regarding youth participation will be distributed to the Presbyteries by the end of November. Youth participants will all be housed at Sparrow Lake Camp, a venue which highlights a Conference camp and also makes duty of care issues much easier. This will be less of a burden for Presbyteries.

- Best use of human and financial resources – generally in compliance;

a) staffing within Toronto Southeast Presbytery: In September I had reported on conversations regarding the area ministries and a social justice position. The conversations about location of office locations, payroll services, etc. are continuing; there is nothing specific to report to this meeting.

- Oversight and compliance – generally in compliance

a) sexual abuse policy: Two of the four scheduled sexual abuse policy workshops for Ministry Personnel have been held; the remaining two will take place in March.

b) racial justice training: All four racial justice training events have been completed. While there was reasonable attendance, there are still several hundred Ministry Personnel who have yet to take the mandatory training. The trainers have completed their commitment to conduct workshops, but there is still much work to be done. I will consult with the trainers and have been working with the personnel ministers and administrative staff on follow-up; we are looking into further training opportunities that can be made available. We now have a record of everyone who has been trained, and that list has been entered into the database. While the racial justice training is mandatory for all Ministry Personnel, we will focus on making sure that all active Ministry Personnel are trained. This will become a winter/spring activity.

c) assessments: I will have a comment on this later in my report which indicates that we are not in compliance with United Church polity.

- Providing resources – generally in compliance

a) staff news: i) Performance reviews for all staff will be conducted in the winter and spring of 2011 in compliance with General Council and Conference policies.

ii) I had reported in September that defibrillators would be installed in all offices in September. The machines seem to be very popular; they have been on order and should be installed by the end of November.

b) meetings with Presbytery chairs and secretaries: The president, past president and I met with Presbytery chairs and secretaries on September 23. In addition to the chairs and secretaries, Presbytery treasurers/finance representatives met with Rose Cambourne; and Presbytery nominations people met with Carol Gierak. All groups seemed to find the gathering useful. The nominations people felt that meeting once a year was adequate, and a suggestion was made that these gatherings should invite other Presbytery people on an occasional basis, e.g. Presbytery oversight chairs, as a means of sharing best practices.

c) extra funds for northern Presbyteries: In 2010 an extra \$15,000 was provided to each of the northern Presbyteries to deal with anticipated high travel costs. I was directed to find a more permanent solution to the situation. In conversation with Rose Cambourne, I have held off work on this until we have all of the 2010 expenses recorded. To date, the travel costs have in fact been quite low, which would indicate that not all of the extra money may have been needed. However, the final bills are not in, so it seems better to wait until we have firmer information.

p. 2-4 – compliance

- Compliance with General Council and other policies – generally in compliance; see later note regarding assessments

*a) workplace violence and harassment legislation, Bill 168: The Ontario government's Bill 168 came into effect on June 15, 2010. The General Council has adopted a policy that covers General Council and Conference employees. Teresa Burnett-Cole has included a component on this legislation as part of the sexual abuse policy workshops she is conducting. When I met with the personnel ministers in October, we discussed how this legislation will be communicated to our Pastoral Charges, since they are employers too.

During the conversation, we very quickly were able to identify a number of Pastoral Charges that have been in conflict over the years. In some cases Section 333 reviews were initiated. Sometimes congregations split or ended up closing. In other cases Ministry Personnel were subject of Section 363 reviews or in others the conflict in the congregation resulted in the minister going on restorative care or long-term disability.

I will ask the Executive to discuss a long-term strategy that would i) inform Pastoral Charges of their responsibilities relating to Bill 168, ii) provide resources to help Pastoral Charges to handle conflict, and iii) provide support for Ministry Personnel. The initial thinking from the personnel ministers and myself is that a

workshop with every Official Board (or equivalent) within the Conference would provide the forum for naming and addressing issues. There would be financial implications if this plan were adopted, but the costs could have long-term benefits if even one congregation did not split or one minister did not end up on restorative care.

p. 2-5 – oversight: Presbyteries

- Reports from Presbyteries – in compliance; requests for the 2011 reports will go out in December of this year
- Oversight visits – in compliance; Executive members have conducted, or been working on, visits to the Presbyteries, with reports coming to the February Executive meeting
- Review of records – not in compliance; Mary Gooley has agreed to review the 2009-2010 minutes of the Presbyteries, but the final set is just being completed; this first year of record-keeping provided some challenges for the administrative staff as we determined what should and should not be included in the records of proceedings of the Presbyteries.
- Communication – in compliance
- Finances – in compliance

p. 2-6 – extra appeals

- In compliance; no requests for extra appeals have come forth since the last Executive meeting

p. 2-7 – interview committee

- generally compliance; Presbyteries have named 39 of the 40 positions requested of them
- the committee conducted interviews on October 20 and November 3; recommendations are included in the omnibus motion of this meeting

p. 2-8 – settlement and pastoral relations committee

- generally in compliance; the vice-chair and the secretary positions are both vacant; the nominations group of the Executive will address this matter
- the committee met October 28; a major topic was the new settlement process which is optional for all candidates with a deadline of February 1 for them to decide whether to go to settlement or seek a call or appointment; information on this has been shared with the Presbyteries

p. 2-9 – learning funds

- in compliance; the fund is advertised on the website; to date three learning fund applications have been received and approved, and one revenue generation grant has been approved. The funds will be advertised every two months.

Executive Secretary Limitations Policies

p. 3-3 – general constraints

- in compliance

*p. 3-4 – budgeting

- in compliance
- financial statement: a financial statement to the end of October is included with this report. There are no particular concerns to raise; the General Council grant and staff salaries lines do not include September and October costs; this is a result of staff changes that have recently taken place at the General Council office. A Formal Hearing was held in October and those costs are reflected in the financial statement.
- staff salaries in 2011: In light of anticipated budget difficulties at the General Council level, the general secretary made a decision that staff salaries would be frozen in 2011, and no step increases would be permitted. I reported on this at the annual meeting. I objected to this action, as did a number of other executive secretaries and in early October the executive secretaries/speaker group met with the general secretary on this issue. She made a commitment to consider the issue, did further consulting, and in late October affirmed the original decision. The impact on Conference staff will be approximately \$30,000.
- rented space: For the last three years the General Council special gifts consultant has used an office at 65 Mayall. This experiment was meant to provide higher profile for the position as well as a regular location for meetings for the person serving that position. At the end of October I was informed by the General Council that the rental arrangement will end December 31. This will have an impact of \$3,600 on the 2011 budget. The move is not surprising giving the little amount of time the staff person was actually in the office, along with general budget constraints within the church system.

p. 3-5 – overall financial policy

- in compliance

p. 3-6 – 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. 3-7 – cash management

- cash available – in compliance
- four months of expenses – in compliance

p. 3-8 – signing officers

- in compliance

p. 3-9 – 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; a task group will present a simplified investment policy at the February Executive meeting

p. 3-10 – vendor relations

- in compliance

*p. 3-11 – revenues/assessments

- in compliance; Rose Cambourne has informed the Presbyteries regarding congregations which are in arrears; Presbyteries have been following up on those concerns
- the following is an up-date on 2009 assessments - 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

The outstanding amounts by the end of October were:

- Living Waters - \$237.15
- Northern Waters - \$1,000
- South West - \$10,338.90
- Toronto Southeast - \$965

- 2010 assessments...

Presbytery	# of charges - fully paid	# of charges – no payment
Living Waters	30	3
Northern Waters	28	4
South West	20	5
Toronto Southeast	18	4

- *I want to raise again the difficulty of outstanding assessments and, at the same time, to recognize an area where the Conference is not in compliance with General Council polity.

Lack of compliance: Section 420.1 of *The Manual* says that “The Conference shall have the right to assess the Presbyteries within its jurisdiction an amount sufficient to meet Conference expenses.” Section 328 gives Presbyteries “the right to assess Pastoral Charges within its jurisdiction an amount sufficient to meet Presbytery expenses including the Conference assessment”.

Under our new structure, we have organized our finances to make the best use of human and financial resources. Conference sends out the assessment notices and receives the payments from the Pastoral Charges. If Presbyteries wish to charge an additional assessment, the financial administrator would add an assessment for that particular Presbytery. To date, no Presbytery has levied an additional assessment.

Technically we are not in compliance because the Conference is authorized only to assess Presbyteries, not Pastoral Charges. At present we do not invoice Presbyteries directly; all invoices are sent directly to Pastoral Charges. I am recommending that the Conference assess the Presbyteries, requesting that each Presbytery pass a motion requesting Conference to send out invoices on the Presbytery’s behalf.

There are pros and cons of taking such an action, i.e. a “pro” is that this would bring us into compliance with *The Manual*; the “con” is that it could reopen in 2010 the discussion of whether Presbyteries wish to continue the present arrangement with the financial administrator doing the work on behalf of the Presbyteries. To date, I have not heard that any Presbytery wishes to take back the financial work. The financial arrangement between the Conference and the Presbyteries will be part of the major review of the new structure that is upcoming in 2012.

Assessments in arrears: Under the old structure, Presbyteries were responsible to pay the Conference assessment and collect that money from the Pastoral Charges. If the money was not forth-coming, the Presbytery was still responsible to Conference, and would have to find its own ways to make up the shortfall.

We didn't think through the implications of a Pastoral Charge being in arrears under our new structure. One option would be for the Conference to bill the Pastoral Charges of a Presbytery for the arrears incurred within that Presbytery. Another solution is to recognize that all Pastoral Charges throughout the Conference would need to pay for those that are in arrears. There may be other solutions that the Executive can discuss, but the polity of the church clearly has pastoral oversight at the Presbytery level, not at the Conference level.

I would suggest that we revise our policy to indicate that Presbyteries should determine by the end of October how to handle arrears from a previous year, e.g. pay the arrears out of Presbytery budget, or authorize a special assessment to the cover the arrears.

p. 3-12 – Presbytery finances

- generally in compliance
- I had reported in September that following the September 23 meeting with Presbytery treasurers/finance representatives, Rose Cambourne would provide suggested changes in the section on “general expenses and Presbytery treasurer”. The group discussed the policies and have no suggested changes.

*p. 3-14 – disposition of property

- in compliance;
- WoodGreen property: An offer has been received for the property at 875 Queen Street East, Toronto. Legal counsel is reviewing the offer and I expect to have a report and/or a recommendation for the Executive on November 10.
- Anten Mills property: The sale of the former Anten Mills United Church was completed on October 12, and we are awaiting the final figures after expenses. Funds received will be applied in accordance with the property policy, p. 5-23.

p. 3-15 – Conference Fund

- in compliance; a task group is working on criteria for responding to requests from educational institutions

p. 3-16 – communication

- generally in compliance
- Website: The up-dating of the Conference's portion of the website has been delayed because of a breakdown of the web minder's server. The server is now reactivated, and a more realistic timeline is that changes in the website should be seen by the end of December.
- Social media: The Conference's Facebook and Twitter accounts initially will be tied to changes on the website. This will minimize the amount of staff time required. The accounts will be included as part of the website redesign.

- *Insight*: In early October I met with our layout artist regarding a new look for *Insight*. Given the positive response to *Insight*, as determined by a survey in the fall of 2009, the changes will be minimal. Content will be based on the communication policy and will be organized loosely in departments.
- Technology fund: The technology fund has been advertised since the end of June. To date seven applications have been received and approved. This program will be re-advertised every two months until the end of the program.

p. 3-17 – Incorporated Ministries

- generally in compliance; there are no significant matters to draw to the attention of the Executive at this meeting

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