

**Executive Secretary Report to
Toronto Conference Executive
April 1, 2011**

This report covers the period from February 1 to March 31, 2011, and includes updates 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. St. Paul's United Church, Orillia has stated that it is willing to host the annual meeting in 2012. A number of things need to be done:

a) A date needs to be set; the president and I are suggesting a two-day meeting as outlined on p. 19 of this report; the dates would be Friday, May 25 and Saturday, May 26. (Pentecost falls on May 27).

b) Does the Conference wish to continue the current three-year pattern established by the 2008 annual meeting, i.e. in non-General Council years, the meeting would focus on speakers and learning with business limited to a half-day?

c) Do we wish to continue to meet in a congregational setting? If yes, do we wish to meet in the same place for three years? If yes, what kind of tendering process will we use?

Mission/Ends policies

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

- Strengthening... to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ – in compliance;

a) annual meeting planning – No change from my last report. The planning is going well; all speakers and leaders are confirmed and Presbyteries are working on finding up to 15 young people to attend as voting members fully integrated into the meeting. Material on the meeting is found on the Conference's website. The information will be updated continuously as we move toward the meeting date.

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

Consultations on a variety of topics have been held or are in the planning stages. a) On March 4 people involved in social justice work gathered in Alliston; Anne Shirley Sutherland hosted this event which brought clarity to a number of issues; the group wishes to meet again in September. b) The president and I will host a gathering of Presbytery chairs and secretaries on April 7; Presbytery oversight people will join the group that day; Conference Archivist Erin Greeno will also be present to talk about archival services and protocols. c) The settlement and pastoral relations committee will expand on April 29 to invite other Presbytery people to talk about pastoral relations issues. d) A second consultation on property policies will take place in early May. e) Jody Maltby will be hosting camping consultation in early June; a number of areas have been identified for discussion.

All of the consultations held to date have been very worthwhile. They have aided Conference/Presbytery and inter-Presbytery communication and have been good for sharing resources. I think the time and money has been well spent, but I expect the need for these events to lessen as time goes along.

- Oversight and compliance – generally in compliance

a) sexual abuse policy: Sexual abuse policy workshops for Ministry Personnel took place March 16 and 23 with approximately 55 at one event and 40 at another. Unexpectedly, I offered leadership along with Ken MacDonald and Todd McDonald, and was pleased to do something I don't usually get to do. Subsequently, I met with the personnel ministers; we will develop a plan in June for involving the remaining Ministry Personnel in these workshops. ii) I mentioned in February that the personnel ministers have identified the need for

more people trained as sexual abuse policy consultants; the personnel ministers will work with their Presbyteries to identify two women and one man who will be trained in the spring. This will become part of our forward planning in June.

b) racial justice training: The General Council has been conducting on-line racial justice seminars. I have not participated in one of these but have heard very positive feedback. I will work with the personnel ministers to follow up on Ministry Personnel who have not completed this mandatory training.

- Providing resources – generally in compliance

a) staff news: i) Susie Henderson, program minister in South West Presbytery, returned to work on March 2 following recovering from mid-January surgery. ii) Teresa Burnett-Cole, Conference personnel minister in Toronto Southeast Presbytery is currently on medical leave to deal with stress related issues. I have contracted with Darren Liepold Nicholson to provide one day of service during Teresa's absence, with back-up from myself and the other two personnel ministers. iii) Performance reviews for all staff are in various beginning stages. I am somewhat behind on this schedule; I under-estimated the amount of time it would take to integrate Conference/Presbytery feedback and the General Council performance management system. In the previous two years, I travelled to each of the Presbyteries to get feedback that would help shape staff work plans for the coming year. This year I intend to use the feedback from the Conference and Presbyteries plus the General Council system to develop staff plans for the next year. iv) Peter Wyatt and I will have conversations in the next month or so to begin the process of preparing him to be acting executive secretary while I am on sabbatical in 2012.

b) 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. As I reported in February, Living Waters does not need the funding in 2011. I will be attending the Northern Waters Presbytery meeting April 5, so should have a clearer idea of its financial situation by the time the Executive meets April 13.

p. 2-4 – compliance

- Compliance with General Council and other policies – generally in compliance;

a) workplace violence and harassment legislation, Bill 168: a) I had expected to have a proposal for the Executive for this meeting based on the conversations we have had to date. However, following our February meeting, I was in touch with Bev Oag of the General Council office as well as the executive secretaries of the other Ontario Conferences. There is a willingness and a desire to coordinate our efforts, so I will be working on this and will have more to say on this later this year. b) In the meantime, however, each of our ministry units needs to prepare policies that will bring them into compliance with the Bill. Teresa Burnett-Cole had done some preliminary work on

this. Cheri Dinovo, United Church minister and one of the Ontario MPPs responsible for the Bill, has offered to have her office review any material that is produced. My plan is to develop template policies that can be offered to every ministry unit, and to have that ready in 2011.

b) accessibility: Conference and Presbyteries are required to develop accessibility policies. I am proposing that the Executive designate three or four people to work on these policies with a report to be received in June or the fall. The deadline for compliance is January 1, 2012.

p. 2-5 – oversight: Presbyteries

- Reports from Presbyteries – in compliance; requests for the 2011 reports have been sent out with reports still arriving as of March 31
- Oversight visits – in compliance; the oversight visits took place in 2010-2011
- Review of records – in compliance; Mary Gooley has agreed to review the minutes for 2010-2011
- 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 in compliance; Presbyteries have named 38 of the 40 positions requested of them
- the committee conducted interviews March 9 and will meet again on May 4; required motions are included in this meeting's omnibus motion

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 is addressing this matter

p. 2-9 – learning funds

- in compliance; the fund is advertised on the website; to date six learning fund applications have been received and approved, and four revenue generation grants has been approved. The funds are advertised every two months.

Executive Secretary Limitations Policies

p. 3-3 – general constraints

- in compliance

*p. 3-4 – budgeting

- in compliance; a) the 2010 audited statements are being presented at this meeting; b) the Executive will need to appoint auditors. c) a triennial budget is being presented at this meeting; Rose Cambourne will join the meeting to assist in the presentation of these two items.

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, though as of April 1 we did not have either a past-president or a president-elect

p. 3-9 – investment policy

- not in compliance; the February Executive adopted the simplified investment policy and a process is underway to hire an investment advisor, following which the policy should be implemented

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; revised wording for this policy is being presented at this meeting
- the following is an up-date on the outstanding amounts related to the 2009 assessments:

- Living Waters - \$237.15
- South West - \$5,901.50
- 2010 assessments outstanding...
 - Living Waters - \$8,358.00
 - Northern Waters - \$9,338.00
 - South West - \$20,492.01
 - Toronto Southeast - \$1,336.25

p. 3-12 – Presbytery finances

- generally in compliance; an on-going issue of poor phone and internet quality at the Living Waters office is being addressed

p. 3-14 – disposition of property

- in compliance; there have been no property transactions

p. 3-15 – Conference Fund

- in compliance; at this meeting a task group will present a proposal for changes to this policy

p. 3-16 – communication

- generally in compliance
- Website: The new website is finally up and running and we continue to iron out the wrinkles. Presbyteries need to take a look at their own web pages.
- Social media: I will be working with the staff on April 20 to develop protocols regarding the use of social media.
- *Insight:* After 35 years of using the same printing company, *The Observer* has switched to a new company. One of the immediate changes is that the “yellow” insert pages are history; the insert will now appear on a glossier paper, and we will be able to run colour photographs. The May issue will be the first time we get to see what difference this will make. The cost of going to colour pictures is marginal and should enhance the look of the insert.
- Technology fund: The technology fund will come to an end on September 30, 2011. To date 12 applications have been approved.

p. 3-17 – Incorporated Ministries

- generally in compliance; General Council is organizing a conference call to discuss the heavy workload caused by our requirements regarding Incorporated Ministries.