

**Executive Secretary Report to  
Toronto Conference Executive  
August 31, 2011**

**This report covers the period from June 1 to August 31, 2011, 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.

**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 – Information has been sent out inviting offers to host the 2013-2015 annual meetings. Interested parties have until mid-November to submit their material. Site visits will be conducted in the late fall, and a recommendation on a venue will be brought to the February meeting of the Executive.
- Best use of human and financial resources – generally in compliance;

Jody Maltby hosted a consultation with camp representatives and staff from the Conference/Presbytery, General Council and Toronto United Church Council.

Up-coming consultations include: September 15 – education and students people hosted by Ken MacDonald; September 16 – a second social justice consultation hosted by Anne Shirley Sutherland; October 6 – Presbytery chairs and secretaries.

The staff held a retreat at the end of June and spent useful time with an outside facilitator reflecting on nominations processes. They suggested that it would be helpful to all Presbyteries if a consultation were held on nominations matters. I am coordinating this event which I hope will take place in October.

- Oversight and compliance – generally in compliance
  - a) sexual abuse policy: Two sexual abuse policy workshops for Ministry Personnel will take place September 21 and 22.
  - b) racial justice training: The personnel ministers have learned that the General Council will be offering two further on-line racial justice training sessions, though the dates have not yet been firmed up.
- Providing resources – generally in compliance
  - a) staff news: i) Teresa Burnett-Cole, Conference personnel minister in Toronto Southeast Presbytery returned to work over the summer. ii) Kerrie Perry and Anne Shirley Sutherland both spent their summers on crutches or in rehab following accidents in June and July. Both worked modified hours and are recovering well, though not as quickly as they would like. iii) The staff held a retreat at Queen of Apostles Centre in Mississauga at the end of June; one of the major topics was working with volunteers, a session led by Bonnie Greene. This was a very worthwhile time that resulted in a plan to do more work on this through a consultation (see comments, above). iv) Todd McDonald will be conducting a workshop October 29 on helping ministers and ministries prepare for sabbaticals.

p. 2-4 accessibility fund

- in compliance; the fund is established and will become available October 1. The fund's existence was highlighted in the September/October issue of *Insight*, and information will be distributed in September to all applicable ministries throughout the Conference.

p. 2-5 – compliance

- Compliance with General Council and other policies – generally in compliance; I am becoming concerned about the number of provincial regulations that are having a significant impact on staff and volunteer time.

a) Bill 168: The workplace violence and harassment law of Ontario came into effect in June, 2010. Training material has been prepared and a train-the-trainers workshop will be held September 20.

\*b) Accessibility: A sub-group of the Executive worked on a Conference policy to bring the Conference into compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). See p. 20.

c) licensing of mental health professionals: The chair of the settlement and pastoral relations committee has learned that all mental health professionals in Ontario will need to be registered. This may include ministers offering counseling to non-parishioners. I have alerted the personnel ministers on this and will provide more information as it becomes available.

d) asbestos: One of our congregations was the subject of a complaint regarding asbestos. The relevant Ontario ministry was called in and requested a meeting with the church's oversight body. A meeting was held involving Kerrie Perry, Joan Revie and Sue Scottinwood of Northern Waters Presbytery plus Rose Cambourne, finance and property administrator. There are some potentially significant implications from this meeting. I have assigned this work to Rose Cambourne, finance and property administrator, and expect to have more information on this for the November meeting of the Executive.

p. 2-6 – interview committee

- generally in compliance; Presbyteries had named 32 of the 40 positions requested of them;
- the committee will conduct interviews on October 19 and November 9-10.

p. 2-7 – learning funds

- in compliance; the fund is advertised on the website; to date in 2011, 13 learning fund applications have been received and approved for slightly less than \$11,000. The money for these grants comes from the General Council; because we were using unspent money from 2010 (\$7,800) plus the 2011 grant (\$7,020), a lower grant ceiling may need to be in place in 2012. The revenue generation grant money (\$12,000) also comes from the General Council; only four grants have been given for a total of \$2,500; Rose Cambourne will speak with Jody Maltby about how to make better use of the money.

p. 2-8 – oversight: extra appeals

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

p. 2-9 – oversight: Presbyteries

- Reports from Presbyteries – in compliance; requests for the 2012 reports will be sent out in December
- Oversight visits – in compliance; the oversight visits took place in 2010-2011; the next scheduled visit will be in 2013-2014
- Review of records – in compliance; Mary Gooley will review the minutes for 2010-2011 and a report will be available at the November meeting of the Executive
- Communication – in compliance
- Finances – in compliance

p. 2-10 – settlement and pastoral relations committee

- in compliance; the committee will meet October 27

**Executive Secretary Limitations Policies**

p. 5-3 – general constraints

- in compliance

\*p. 5-4 – budgeting

- in compliance;
- See point #8. A current financial statement is found at p. 19. I met with Rose Cambourne, finance and property administrator, to review the actual expenditures to the end of August. At the time the budget was originally prepared in February/March, we felt comfortable with the figures presented to the annual meeting. Since then, however, we see three areas where we believe significant reductions can be anticipated, i.e. litigation, office costs and property costs. I am recommending that the Executive approve a revised 2012 budget with assessment savings of approximately \$100,000.
- Included in the reductions is \$30,000 which had been ear-marked to provide assistance to St. John's United Church, Alliston to make the Northern Waters Presbytery office accessible. St. John's has not determined when it will proceed with renovations. When these renovations proceed, I will recommend that the funds come out of the Conference Fund or the property fund rather than through the budget.

p. 5-6 – cash management

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

p. 5-7 – communication

- generally in compliance
- *Insight:* In preparation for my sabbatical I have hired a freelance editor for the two issues while I will be away. On a longer-term basis, I plan to hire a permanent editor to take over this work.
- Technology fund: The technology fund will come to an end on September 30, 2011. To date 15 applications have been approved.

p. 5-8 – Conference Fund

- in compliance

p. 5-9 – disposition of property

- in compliance; the Conference is in the process of selling the property of the former Centennial-Rouge United Church in Toronto Southeast Presbytery
- Over the summer I approached the property chairs for South West and Toronto Southeast Presbyteries about hiring a common real estate agent to coordinate property sales. I received a cool response from one Presbytery and have not heard from the other.

p. 5-10 – Incorporated Ministries

- generally in compliance;
- In April a new Incorporated Ministries handbook was produced by the General Council; the section on Conference oversight has been included in the Executive's policy handbook at Appendix D starting at p. 6-9.
- A number of the Incorporated Ministries run housing of various kinds on long-term leases. A member of the former corporations advisory committee had alerted me some time ago that at the end of these leases, the properties may revert to The United Church of Canada. A preliminary search of the financial statements indicates that 11 buildings could come to the church, at least six in 2030-2033. (Some of the financial statements were unclear as to the expiry of the leases.)
- I have seen reports that expressed concerns about diminishing reserves held by the Incorporated Ministries.

p. 5-11 – investment policy

- not in compliance; Rose Cambourne and I met with the investment advisor in July to go over the policy; he recommended that investment of the equity portion of the holdings (0-15%) be postponed until September until the volatility of the markets calmed following the debt discussions in the US. The funds were invested in short-term GICs until the global picture became more clear.

\*p. 5-12 – marriage officiant registration

- in compliance; See also p. 26 for minor revisions recommended by the administrative staff and settlement committee people.

p. 5-13 – overall financial policy

- in compliance

p. 5-14 – Presbytery finances

- in compliance

p. 5-16 – 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. 5-17 – 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 the outstanding amounts related to the 2009 assessments:
  - Living Waters - \$237.15
  - South West - \$4,151.60
- 2010 assessments outstanding...
  - Living Waters - \$8,358
  - Northern Waters - \$8,338.00
  - South West - \$15,496.25
  - Toronto Southeast - \$1,829

In accordance with item #5 in the policy, Rose Cambourne has written to the Presbyteries asking for instruction on the options for covering the outstanding amounts, i.e. payment through the Presbytery's budget or through a special assessment. When reviewing this policy, we realized that there is no "default" position, e.g. if the Presbytery did not respond, what would Rose do?

I am recommending that #5 be amended to add. "In the event that a Presbytery does not provide direction on how the arrears will be covered, a special assessment will be levied on that Presbytery in the ensuing year."

p. 5-18 – signing officers

- will be in compliance shortly; Rose Cambourne will work with the new president-elect and acting Executive Secretary Peter Wyatt to be authorized at the bank

p. 5-19 – vendor relations

- in compliance

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