

**Executive Secretary Report to
Toronto Conference Executive
November 4, 2011**

This report covers the period from September 1 to November 4, 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 – i) 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. ii) The president, president-elect and I met in October to do planning for the 2012 meeting and to take a look ahead to the 2013 program parts of that meeting.
 - b) archives location: The General Council Executive meeting in mid-November may decide the location of the General Council office. This could have an impact

on the location of the Central Conferences Archives. At the time of writing this report, I don't have any indication of what might happen, so will provide an update if warranted.

- Best use of human and financial resources – generally in compliance;
 - a) acting executive secretary: Peter Wyatt met with the president, president-elect and me to do planning for the November 16 Executive meeting and to go over other matters that will need his attention while I am on sabbatical. Peter will work Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays in the January 1-April 30, 2012 period.
 - b) my sabbatical: See p. 16 for an outline of what I will be doing on my sabbatical.
 - c) consultations: In the September/October period, consultations were held in the following areas: education and students, social justice, Presbytery chairs and secretaries, and nominations.
 - *i) The education and students gathering spent almost half the day on recruitment for ministry. The urgency is real, considering that in the next 10 years; more than 50 percent of current Ministry Personnel will be eligible for retirement. I will be following up on this, working with Pam Locke of Toronto Southeast Presbytery. We had an initial meeting at Emmanuel College November 4, and will determine how to broaden the discussion in the coming months and years. This topic may tie in with one piece of my sabbatical work.

As an initial step regarding recruitment, Pam and I are proposing that the Conference host an initial event for people who may be considering ministry as a vocation. This would not be a discernment/enquirer process, but would be a chance for discussion about what ministry is like. Current ministers, retired ministers and others would be resources for the event. We see inviting up to 100 people for a residential event at Emmanuel College in May, 2012, and would be asking ministers in congregations and Education & Students committees to identify individuals who might have an interest in attending. The event would provide information on ministry as a vocation and where theological education can be accessed. I am recommending that the Executive approve a budget of up to \$15,000 with the source being the Conference Fund.

ii) Five members of the education and students consultation volunteered to clarify how internship procedures are done in this Conference. The group met on November 2. It discussed how all the *Manual* requirements can be met. Most of these tasks will be done at the Presbytery level, but there is a need for a coordinating person at the Conference level, somewhat similar to the convenor of the mission support consultation. The group began work on a position description

that will be offered to the Executive's nominations group for refinement and action.

iii) The annual mission support consultation was conducted November 1 and was chaired by the president. The recommendations regarding grants are found on p. 19, and a motion to approve the recommendations is included in the omnibus motion. Members of the consultation requested that a wider consultation take place in April to have a broader discussion about future M&S funding. I will ask Peter Wyatt to follow up on this.

The consultation also requested that it be freed from a previous commitment to allocate 20% of all funds available for chaplaincy, and up to 15% percent to be set aside for native ministry. This would provide greater flexibility when dealing with all applications. The percentages were put in place by the previous Executive at the recommendation of the former mission support committee. The new Executive has not provided any guidance on this matter. My opinion is that the current restrictions could simply lapse unless the Executive determines otherwise.

d) chaplaincy: I have been raising a concern with Presbytery chairs and secretaries, the settlement committee, and anyone else who will listen that we need to do a better job at providing pastoral care during times of litigation like Appeals, reviews, Formal Hearings, etc. Two of our Presbyteries have chaplains who receive a yearly honourarium; two Presbyteries have no chaplains. I have been encouraging all Presbyteries to appoint chaplains, and to expand their role to cover the pastoral care issues I just mentioned.

e) software up-grades: Software is being upgraded on all staff computers in October and November. This work is all done through the General Council's technology unit and is one of the benefits of the agreement we have between the General Council and the Conference on technology issues.

- Oversight and compliance – generally in compliance

a) sexual abuse policy: I provided leadership in two sexual abuse policy workshops for Ministry Personnel on September 21 with Todd McDonald and September 22 with Ken MacDonald. Teresa Burnett-Cole conducted a third workshop on October 3. Very few Ministry Personnel have not taken the training. Workshops will now be held on an annual basis for people who are new to the Conference.

b) racial justice training: The personnel ministers have learned that the General Council will be offering further on-line racial justice training sessions, most likely in the fall of 2012. The administrative staff is keeping track of those who have taken the training.

- Providing resources – generally in compliance

a) performance review follow-up: In the spring I had conducted work reviews for all staff except for Teresa Burnett-Cole who was on leave. Using a General Council document, the staff prepared individual learning objectives for the year. Rose Cambourne (for administrative staff) and I (for Rose and program staff) meet periodically with each person to see how their plans are unfolding.

b) sabbaticals: Todd McDonald conducted a workshop October 29 to help ministers and ministries prepare for sabbaticals. I attended the workshop and found that people were highly engaged throughout the day.

c) transfer and settlement: Settlement and pastoral relations committee chair David Shearman and secretary Andy Comar will visit Emmanuel College in early November to brief candidates on the transfer and settlement processes.

p. 2-4 accessibility fund

- in compliance; the fund is established and is now available. Rose Cambourne has had a number of initial enquiries. The money for this comes from the former technology fund, which is now closed. Just over \$82,000 was transferred to the accessibility fund. With 2010 under-spending, the fund currently has approximately \$340,000 to assist ministries to become compliant with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

p. 2-5 – compliance

- Compliance with General Council and other policies – generally in compliance; in September I said that I am becoming concerned about the number of provincial regulations that are having a significant impact on staff and volunteer time. That opinion has not changed.

a) Bill 168: The workplace violence and harassment law of Ontario came into effect in June, 2010. Training material was prepared and a train-the-trainers workshop was held September 20. The workshop raised many questions, which resulted in a re-working of much of the material and the development of new resources. A training event will take place November 24, and workshops within the Presbyteries will follow. The cost of the program to date is \$38,450.

*b) Accessibility: In September an Executive sub-group presented a Conference policy to bring the Conference into compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). I have got more coaching from Kerrie Perry on this policy, and should be able to better answer questions at the November Executive meeting. See p. 22.

c) licensing of mental health professionals: As I reported in September, the chair of the settlement and pastoral relations committee had learned that all mental health professionals in Ontario will need to be registered. This may include ministers offering counseling to non-parishioners. I alerted the personnel ministers on this and the chair of the committee raised this issue with the settlement committee on October 27. There is no action to take at this time, other than to be alert to potential changes down the road.

*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. Rose Cambourne, finance and property administrator, has provided a report on this for the November meeting of the Executive. See p. 28. I am asking the Executive whether it sees any Conference involvement in this issue.

p. 2-6 – interview committee

- generally in compliance; Presbyteries have named 32 of the 40 positions requested of them; one gap is that there are no diaconal ministers on the committee. Committee chair Cindy Cooper is seeking diaconal people to serve on the committee.
- the committee conducted interviews on October 19 and will do “final” interviews November 9-10. A verbal report will be given at the Executive meeting if necessary, and any required motions will be part of the omnibus motion. The next interviews are March 7, 2012. Peter Wyatt will provide staff support.

*p. 2-7 – learning funds

- in compliance; the fund is advertised on the website; to date in 2011, 16 learning fund applications have been received and approved for a total of \$12,498. 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. I am recommending that the new limit be \$500, down from the current \$1,000.
- 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. General Council has ended this program to focus on other stewardship/philanthropy projects. Any money not allocated by December 31 will be returned to the General Council.

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 visits will be in 2013-2014
- Review of records – not in compliance; Mary Gooley will review the minutes for 2010-2011, but one of the unintended consequences of the use of Commissions is that the administrative staff must chase more people to get the minutes in the first place and then chase a second time to get signatures when the *Record of Proceedings* is produced. Two sets of Presbytery minutes are now complete and the other two are nearly ready. Mary will review all four sets at one sitting as soon as they are all ready.
- Communication – in compliance
- Finances – in compliance

p. 2-10 – settlement and pastoral relations committee

- in compliance; the committee met October 27
- the committee spent time looking at the proposed move of pastoral relations work from the Presbytery level to the Conference level. By the time our Executive meets, the General Council Executive will have met and discussed a report from a task group. I may have more up-to-date information by the time our Executive meets.

Executive Secretary Limitations Policies

p. 5-3 – general constraints

- in compliance
- A number of times I have said that I really enjoy the freedom that policy governance gives to me as executive secretary, and I've said too that I have never felt more accountable. However, I've also raised the question about how the Executive would know what questions to ask, and how it would know whether I was providing full information. In conversation with another Conference colleague, I learned that British Columbia Conference addresses this issue through an external audit conducted triennially. I will get more information on this process and will bring a recommendation to a subsequent meeting of the Executive.
- #7 – One of the Presbyteries may not have sufficient funds to cover 2011 expenses. I have agreed that the Conference will cover any over-spending. The Presbytery passed a motion indicating that the funds will be returned from the money received from the Presbyteries of Toronto Conference Corporation (PTCC) in 2012.

*p. 5-4 – budgeting

- in compliance;
- In the last month I received information about an inter-Presbytery event that would highlight a General Council priority, and within a few days had a request for Conference support for a fund-raiser for a Conference-related institution. Following discussion with the president and president-elect, I informed the fund-raisers that Conference would not be assisting. I have taken no action with regard to the other item. These scenarios raised the question of what financial support the Conference can or should offer to activities that are not specifically related to the Conference's mission policy. I am asking the Executive to discuss whether there are any circumstances under which the Conference would offer financial support in cases such as the ones described here.

p. 5-6 – cash management

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

p. 5-7 – communication

- generally in compliance
- *Insight*: I have hired Deborah Aldcorn on a one-year contract as editor of *Insight*. Deborah has done work for *Mandate* magazine, *Chatelaine*, the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post*. Her first issue will be March/April, 2012. She has written a profile that appeared in the November/December issue of *Insight* and may have a second article in the January/February issue.
- Technology fund: As noted earlier, the technology fund was closed on September 30. Over the life of the fund, \$17,000 was distributed to ministries requesting assistance.
- I am continuing a staff discussion about social media; the next meeting on this is November 18.

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. The real estate agents have recommended a reduction in the price, and I accepted that recommendation on October 31.
- Conference now has responsibility for selling the Dunkerron property in Northern Waters Presbytery. The Dunkerron property came to the Conference as of November 1. Normally we would transfer the property to our memorandum of

- understanding with the General Council whereby the General Council holds the property since Conference is not a legal entity. In this case, however, General Council would not accept the property because there is a cemetery attached. This raised a procedural issue regarding Trustees. When a property is held by the General Council on our behalf, Trustees are not required; however, in a case like Dunkerron, Trustees are still required. The Dunkerron Trustees all wished to be dismissed, so Northern Waters Presbytery has been asked to name three Trustees, two of whom are Rose Cambourne and Linda Gray. This will expedite matters.
- Conference has been holding the property of the former Riverdale United Church in Toronto Southeast Presbytery. The Presbytery had requested that the property be held until the Presbytery could determine whether the property had a use according to its mission strategy. The agreement was that the Presbytery would inform Conference by November 30, 2011 whether it needed the property for some mission-related use. A Presbytery task group has requested that the November 30 deadline be extended to the end of February. Because the property is not a financial liability at the moment, I am satisfied with this extension, but there should be no further extensions. Rose Cambourne has learned that the property may require a new roof with an estimated cost of \$75,000-80,000. I don't want us to waste money if, for example, the property were to be sold and demolished. The longer we keep the property, the greater the likelihood that this repair will be a necessity.

p. 5-10 – Incorporated Ministries

- generally in compliance;

p. 5-11 – investment policy

- in compliance; Rose Cambourne has been in touch with our investment advisor. In August he had 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. We now have \$50,000 in equities.

p. 5-12 – marriage officiant registration

- in compliance
- I spoke with the settlement and pastoral relations committee regarding the policy on Voluntary Associate Ministers (VAM). My question was whether this should be a Conference policy or a Presbytery policy or whether there should be a policy at all, since the VAM category only exists in a few Conferences and is not a General Council category. The Presbyteries will have discussions about this.

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
- Northern Waters - \$0
- South West - \$1237.15
- Toronto Southeast - \$0

- 2010 assessments outstanding...

- Living Waters - \$2,728
- Northern Waters - \$7,338
- South West - \$12,366
- Toronto Southeast - \$0

In accordance with item #5 in the policy, Rose Cambourne will add a special assessment to each Presbytery's overall assessment to cover the amounts outstanding within each Presbytery.

p. 5-18 – signing officers

- in compliance; the president-elect and acting Executive Secretary Peter Wyatt are now authorized as signers

p. 5-19 – vendor relations

- in compliance