

**Executive Secretary Report to
Toronto Conference Executive
April 14, 2010**

This report covers the period from the end of January to the beginning of April, 2010, and includes up-dates on items mentioned in the February 10, 2010 report to the Executive.

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) Jody Maltby convened a second consultation on the Mission & Service Fund on March 25; I was unable to be present because of illness; the outcome is that each Presbytery will be asked to have a discussion about long-term stewardship actions, with Proposals being submitted to the 2011 annual meeting of Conference
 - b) As reported in February, *Insight* will continue to be published in *The United Church Observer*. I have not yet been in touch with Presbytery communication teams regarding content. I expect to have *Insight* re-designed in the fall.

c) planning for the annual meeting is entering the final phases. In addition to Moderator Mardi Tindal, we will be joined by former moderator Very Rev. Robert (Bob) Smith, plus other presenters who will help explore the themes of soul, community, creation. Last year's annual meeting passed a motion that "business" be extremely limited. I expect people to be quite surprised by how little time is available for the traditional "business" – less than an hour by the time we do the required "business" of hearing from ministry candidates, honouring retirees, dealing with the budget, etc.

On-line registration was delayed by a couple of weeks and then there was a glitch which the staff and the web minder worked to rectify.

d) Ken MacDonald organized a gathering of persons who are willing to act as crisis response team members. About a dozen people can be available at short notice to assist congregations in distress, e.g. death of a minister, murder within the congregation or community, natural disasters, etc.

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

* a) I have contacted all Presbyteries to have a conversation regarding staff roles and plans for the up-coming year. Meetings with the staff, individually and collectively, indicate some issues of concern – Presbytery bodies with unclear mandates or over-lapping mandates, committees or groups which have very few members and/or very few ideas about their role; Presbytery bodies making little use of staff, especially in the program areas, and staff feeling that they are developing programs without a clear sense of the relationship with the direction desired by the Presbytery.

In the first year of the restructuring, we worked very hard to honour the directions regarding staffing as set out by the former Commissions, i.e. that the staff should be facilitators of the work rather than doers of the work. This has caused some of the confusion as both staff and elected people are not sure what to do and when to do it. In late February I read Dan Hotchkiss' book on *Governance and Ministry* and found his description of policy governance in congregations to be very helpful. Similar to the Conference Executive, he makes clear distinctions between the roles of the governors and the roles of staff which, in his opinion, can include volunteers.

When I meet with the Presbyteries in May/June, I will be discussing these ideas. E.g. if the Presbyteries were clear about their missions, staff could be set free to initiate ministry plans and projects. Better communication amongst each Presbytery's structure would be required, and I could see this as being a more satisfying situation for both staff and the Presbyteries. (See the notes from Hotchkiss included in this meeting's packet of material).

- b) financial commitments – I will present a report at this meeting outlining how the Conference has responded to the 2010 financial commitments discussed at the February 10 meeting
- Oversight and compliance – generally in compliance
 - a) Sexual abuse policy – I have been working with the personnel ministers to organize a training session May 15 for persons responsible for implementing the United Church’s sexual abuse policy. The training will be led by Kathy McDonald, legal counsel at the General Council office, and Brian Nicholson, former chair of the Conference’s committee on sexual abuse. The event will include persons designated by the Presbyteries as officers of the Court, co-chairs of the committee (two from each Presbytery), sexual abuse consultants, the personnel ministers and myself.
 - b) racial justice training – The planning for four racial justice training events is underway, though to date only one has been scheduled. Three of our four trainers are Ministry Personnel with heavy congregational responsibilities during the Lent/Easter period. I am hopeful that the remaining plans will progress more quickly.
 - c) duty of care – I have contracted with Susan Howard, former Conference staff, to conduct the duty of care training sessions at the Conference camps this summer. Sue will work with trainers-in-training so they can learn what needs to be done at each camp. They would then take over the training in subsequent years.
 - Providing resources – generally in compliance;
 - a) staff news - Linda Gray was on sick leave until the middle of March, following successful brain surgery; other administrative staff stepped in to pick up pieces of her work while she was off; she is now on a graduated return to work plan, working limited hours, mostly out of the Living Waters Presbytery office which is five minutes from her home.
 - b) *Directory* - the non-publication of the *Directory* was a disappointment and an embarrassment.
 - c) Presbytery finances – Rose Cambourne, finance administrator, convened a gathering of Presbytery treasurers to work out protocols regarding finances. One bugbear related to the payment of meals at Presbytery meetings. There was some confusion about how this would happen. Rose has produced clear directions in this regard.
 - d) meetings with Presbytery chairs and secretaries – The next meeting of Presbytery chairs and secretaries will be convened by the president on April 29.

* e) litigation training – I am concerned that Presbyteries should not proceed with Appeals, Formal Hearings, and reviews without adequate training for those involved in those processes. In one case we narrowly avoided a lawsuit and embarrassment because of a technical issue, and in another case a reviewer did not have adequate support from the Presbytery. I have spoken to the staff about this, and have suggested that I should be asked by the Presbyteries to do initial training in all these processes as they arise; other staff would be involved in the training so they could learn the requirements of each process, thus becoming resources for the Presbyteries.

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 have been received, or are on their way for posting on the website or in the annual meeting resource book
- Oversight visits – in compliance; the Executive will work on planning these visits at this meeting
- Review of records – in compliance; a motion regarding Mary Gooley’s review of the records is included in the omnibus motion at this meeting; I will approach Mary about reading 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
- South West Presbytery has still not provided a full complement of 10 persons

p. 25 – settlement and pastoral relations committee

- generally in compliance; the vice-chair and the secretary are the same person
- as of April 1, no Pastoral Charges had indicated that they were open for settlement this year; this could provide difficulties for candidates seeking ordination in May

Executive Secretary Limitations Policies

p. 29 – general constraints

- in compliance
- President Carol Gierak will report on my performance evaluation which was discussed at a meeting March 19 with my supervisor, Carol Hancock, General Council Officer, Regional Relations.

p. 30 – budgeting

- in compliance; a three-year budget is being presented to the Executive at this meeting
- at the February 10 meeting of the Executive, a request was made for financial support for right relations initiatives; this was referred to me as a “means” issue; I was able to find \$1,400 from the Pinawa Group budget in 2009 and 2010

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 – I will present a plan at this meeting for bringing the Conference into compliance with this policy

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; I will present a plan at this meeting which will outline possible use of Conference assets; any action taken by the Executive will provide guidance for how assets should be managed

p. 36 – vendor relations

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

p. 37 – revenues/assessments

- in compliance; a number of Pastoral Charges have raised concerns about the 2010 assessment
- the finance administrator informed the Presbyteries regarding congregations which are in arrears; Presbyteries have been following up on those concerns

p. 38 – Presbytery finances

- in compliance

i:\conference\executive\general\cesreport100414.doc

