

**Executive Secretary Report from David Allen  
to Toronto Conference Executive  
April 19, 2017**

**This report provides highlights from the period from approximately February 8-April 12.**

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. In some cases, the wording will include “In compliance” which the Executive Secretary interprets as “everything required by the policy is being done”. In other cases, the words “generally in compliance” are used, which the Executive Secretary interprets as “to the best of my knowledge, there are no gaps, though progress can always be made”.

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

The Executive will want to review this policy if the Affirming Ministry vision statement and plan of action are approved at the annual meeting.

- Strengthening... to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ – generally in compliance
  - a) \*annual meeting: The annual meeting is now five weeks away. All planning is in place. This Executive meeting will look at the proposal for extending the terms of office for the President and Past-President. In agreeing to continue in office, both

- individuals indicated that they would like to explore ways of making the responsibilities less onerous. As one initial step, I am recommending that if the proposal passes at the annual meeting, the 2018 meeting be a two-day meeting occurring on May 25-26. These dates have the added benefit of not falling on Linda Gray's birthday on May 27.
- b) exchange visit: The visit by representatives of Seoul Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea will take place May 22-30. Planning has been extensive and has been particularly heavy on Linda Gray, the President and myself. In addition to attending the annual meeting, the visitors will attend worship in 11 different congregations throughout the Conference.
  - c) Affirming ministry planning: This Executive meeting will review suggestions for improving the Affirming Ministry vision statement and plan of action. The exercise of having the documents translated into various languages has shown the depth and diversity within the Conference. Translations into the Akan vocabulary, Chinese, French, Korean, Portuguese and Taiwanese were made available on the website along with the original English version.
  - d) Explorer project: The third year of the Explorer project will kick off in May with Explorers and communities of faith being matched in a variety of Conferences across the church.
  - e) Retirees: The President, Past-President and myself are hosting four events for retirees in April and May. This is a chance to offer thanks for the ministry of retirees, and to give them a chance to meet Conference officers, presbytery chairs and secretaries, and the Conference Personnel Ministers. .
  - f) Kenya visit: Two Toronto Conference members participated in a General Council trip to visit church partners in Kenya. At the February meeting the Executive declined to offer financial support. The visitors have asked to make a presentation to the annual meeting (also declined) and the Executive. The Executive's discussion about program work (see p. 16/17-551) will provide better guidance for how to deal with requests such as this in the future.
- Best use of human and financial resources – generally in compliance
- a) \*staffing: i) I conducted performance reviews for all Conference/presbytery staff. I was very pleased with the positive responses to the work of the staff. There were some suggestions for improvement; these are being addressed. \*ii) As part of the performance reviews, I discussed future staffing depending on the result of the remits that are currently under discussion. If the remits fail, I do not anticipate staffing changes, though the financial positions of other Conferences could still mean that there could be realignment. If the remits pass, there will be a significant impact on staff. Either they will see their positions eliminated entirely and their employment lost, or they will be eligible to apply for as-yet-undefined

- positions in the new regional council. Conference has already made provision for severance for those whose employment will end. The package usually includes career counselling. I am recommending that career counselling and increased educational support be offered if the three-council remit passes. This would provide valuable assistance for those who wish to upgrade their skills for future positions within the church or for different ministry or employment outside the church. iii) social justice staff position – Discussions continue amongst the presbyteries regarding a joint social justice position paid by the presbyteries. They are very close to advertising a position.
- b) \*Grand River Spiritual and Education Resources. I informed the Grand River/AVEL partners that Conference would end its financial contributions at the end of 2017 and formally withdraw from the partnership in February, 2018 thus fulfilling the one-year notice period that is required. At the February meeting, the Executive discussed paying for individual memberships for communities of faith that are using AVEL resources. The report that was received (see p. 16/17-553) showed numbers significantly lower than I had expected. Therefore, I am suggesting that no action be taken on providing AVEL memberships.
- c) property: There are a number of items to report.
- i) Property management: The property management agreement with Toronto United Church is now being implemented. Tim Beard is now looking after the following properties: Newton-Robinson and Dunkerron (Northern Waters), Lakeside and Madill (Living Waters).
  - ii) Victoria Memorial, Honeywood: The Executive had passed motions regarding the disbanding and property matters related to Victoria Memorial United Church in Honeywood. In late March John Neff and I met with the local trustees and have reached an agreement that will ensure that all disbanding and closure requirements are met. This work should be completed by the end of the summer.
  - iii) Living Waters office: The sign company will be installing the building and door signs this month. The company had a delay in producing the signs and weather issues. The water line from the Township will be completed by mid-June.
  - iv) Toronto Southeast office: The property manager has prepared a preliminary report outlining recommendations on future capital projects. These projects will be prioritized as to the greatest need.
  - v) Conference/South West offices: Line painting in the parking lot will be completed in early spring. Accessible parking spaces will be clearly marked.
  - vi) Glen Ayr United Church (Toronto Southeast Presbytery): The closing date for this property is June 28, 2017. Funds received will be distributed according to Conference policy.
- d) sabbatical funding: To date 29 grants to pastoral charges and 27 grants to ministry personnel have been provided for a total of \$129,000.

- e) mission support grants: the proposed criteria for 2018 mission support grants will come to the June meeting.
  - f) Moderator's visits: Moderator Jordan Cantwell was scheduled to attend the November 27 worship service at Christian Island, but had to cancel because of illness. That visit has been rescheduled for May 14. She will be at Georgina Island September 10. Visits to Northern Waters and South West Presbyteries are scheduled for November and May, respectively. She will visit Toronto Southeast Presbytery May 1 and 2, and will attend the TUCC Heart and Vision gathering in mid-May.
- Oversight and compliance – generally in compliance
  - \*Providing resources – generally in compliance. The February Executive asked me to provide some thoughts on why Conference is involved in program work. See p. 16/17-551. Depending on how that conversation goes and the results of the remit, I am recommending that Conference engage in a review of its structure based on eight years of experience of the current structure.

p. 2-4 compliance – generally in compliance

p. 2-5 oversight: Presbyteries – in compliance

- Reports from presbyteries: Presbytery reports will be received at the June meeting of the Executive.
- Oversight visits – The presbyteries have been informed that oversight visits by Conference will be suspended until the results of the remit on a three-council model are known.
- Review of records – Mary Gooley has agreed to review the records of the four presbyteries for the 2016/2017 year.

### **Executive Governance Policies**

One of the additions to the role of the Executive Secretary is to bring to your attention any areas where I believe you as an Executive are not in compliance with these policies. See p. 5-3, #7.

p. 3-3 – Duties of Executive members

- P. 3-4 re Presbytery representatives: Northern Waters Presbytery now has a full complement of appointees to the Executive as we welcome Ed Elliotson (lay) and Kristal McGee (ministry personnel).

p. 3-6 – Conflict of interest

- No non-compliance issues to mention

p. 3-9 – embracing diversity

- No non-compliance issues to mention. The Executive will want to review this policy if the Affirming Ministry vision statement and plan of action are approved by the annual meeting.

\*p. 3-10 – Nominations

- Presbyteries have begun the process of nominating people to be commissioners to GC43. A brief printed report of the appointments made by the Executive will be presented at this meeting; this will be for information at the annual meeting.

p. 3-37 – Policy review schedule

- No non-compliance issues to mention.

p. 3-39 – Principles of conduct

- No non-compliance issues to mention.

\*p. 3-42 – Property

- No non-compliance issues to mention.
- I am moving paragraph 2(a) to be a stand-alone item to cover situations where presbyteries ask the Conference to hold a property while it determines possible future ministry needs. Its placement at the moment makes it appear that this paragraph relates to surplus property.

p. 3-45 – Public statements

- No non-compliance issues to mention.
- The President issued a statement about anti-Muslim discrimination. She also issued a Holy Week message.

p. 3-46 – Signing officers

- In compliance.

p. 3-47 – Training and education

- No non-compliance issues to mention.

**Executive/staff relations policies**

p. 4-3 – Relationship to staff

- No non-compliance issues to mention.

p. 4-5 – Monitoring Executive Secretary performance

- No non-compliance issues to mention.
- The last General Council review of me took place in late 2014.

**Executive Secretary Limitations Policies**

p. 5-3 – general constraints

- in compliance
- Re #8; Anne Shirley Sutherland and Jody Maltby have filled in as acting Executive Secretary from time to time and are familiar enough with the role of Executive Secretary to be able to act in an emergency. I have received affirmation from the Chair and Secretary of Northern Waters Presbytery to add John Neff as an occasional acting Executive Secretary.

p. 5-4 – accessibility

- in compliance; the operational policy is found at p. 7-3

\*p. 5-5 – budget and financial

- generally in compliance
- \*this meeting will discuss the audited financial statements and the proposed budget for 2018 and subsequent years.
- Arrears for 2016 include:
  - Living Waters – 6 pastoral charges for a total of \$15,374.30

p. 5-10 – communication

- in compliance; the operational policy is found at p. 7-12

p. 5-11 – correspondence

- In compliance

p. 5-12 Incorporated Ministries

- generally in compliance
- Housing corporations have been contacted about the removal of oversight requirements as per a new General Council policy. Release Agreements have been signed with Brookbanks Non-Profit Homes Inc., Humbervale Christian Outreach Foundation Inc. and St. Matthew's (Richmond Hill) Non-Profit Homes.

Two further agreements are in process and several more are being worked on by the Incorporated Ministry boards of directors.

p. 5-13 – investment

- In compliance

\*p. 5-16 letters of good standing

- “Good standing” is outlined in *The Manual* at Section J.4. Some years ago Conference expanded its understanding of good standing to add in police records checks and training mandated by General Council. However, an Opinion from the General Secretary outlines a full process that must be followed to determine that someone is not in good standing. No mention is made of police checks or additional training. Therefore, the current policy is not in compliance with *The Manual* and will be deleted. This does not affect the marriage officiant registration policy found on p. 7-33.

p. 5-17 property

- in compliance

Operational policies

- There have been no changes in operational policies since the last meeting of the Executive.