
MINUTES OF
THE EXECUTIVE OF BC CONFERENCE
The United Church of Canada
November 12-14, 2015
The Mountain View Room, Burnaby, BC

PRESENT	Graham Brownmiller, Cari Copeman-Haynes, Ken Fanning, Ian Fraser, Doug Goodwin (Executive Secretary), Murray Gordon, Judith Hardcastle, Everest Kao, Jean Macdonald, Kathy MacKean, Carol Martin, Nancy O’Higgins, Jeff Seaton, Keith Simmonds (President), Tayana Simpson, Rob Smith, Ruth Stebbing, Cheryl Swedburg, Jim White
REGRETS	Wayne Hughes, Ray Jones, Robert Young
STAFF PRESENT	Katie Purych (Recording Secretary)
AUTHORITY	In the name of Jesus Christ, and by the authority of the 2015 General Meeting of BC Conference, the President, Keith Simmonds, declared the regular meeting of the BC Conference Executive duly opened for the purpose of conducting the business properly before it. A quorum was present.
WELCOME AND GROUP BUILDING	Members of the Executive introduced themselves and checked in. Keith Simmonds led worship focusing on Luke 4: 16-22.
PRESIDENT REPORT	The President gave a summary of some of the work he has done on behalf of Conference. He highlighted his attendance at the General Council meeting in Corner Brook in August, noting he had the chance to connect with other Conference Presidents to talk about experiences common across the country. He also attended an inaugural interfaith council gathering and feels it has potential for good, future relationships and work.
AGENDA	The President introduced the proposed agenda. <i>M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Nancy O’Higgins)</i> <i>that the agenda as presented be adopted (Appendix I, page ____).</i>
MINUTES	<i>M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Graham Brownmiller)</i> <i>that the minutes of the March 12-14, 2015 and the June 16, 2015 BC Conference Executive meetings be adopted.</i>
CORRESPONDENCE REPORT	<i>M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Rob Smith)</i> <i>that the Correspondence Report (Appendix II, page ____) be received and its recommendations adopted.</i>
GOVERNANCE TRAINING: LISTENING	Ian Fraser gave a presentation on Listening to the Ownership, which started with a brief history of how Policy Governance was adopted by Conference. He then explained the basic premises for how Policy Governance and, in particular, “Listening to the Ownership,” works. The Executive then met in smaller groups to discuss the questions:

- 1) Who is the Ownership?
- 2) What have we done in the past?
- 3) What might we do going forward?

It was noted that the Executive has not been very consistent in its approach to Listening. Some wondered whether assigning the responsibility of the Listening time at Executive meetings to the President-Elect was effective.

It was generally felt that having good, consistent questions as well as a good questioning and listening process would be helpful. While it was felt that using social media to hear from people might be helpful, direct conversations with individuals and Presbyteries would allow deeper listening.

Questions to assist with listening should focus not only on “the gaps” people might perceive but also on the strengths and gifts already evident in the life of the church.

The Executive also recognized that it had identified “God, as revealed through Jesus Christ, made known by the Spirit who calls and directs us” as an “owner.” Ways of listening to God at Executive meetings also needed to be honoured.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned for the night.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2015

WORSHIP

The meeting began with morning worship.

GENERAL COUNCIL WORK

Graham Brownmiller and Jean Macdonald reported on the decisions and work of the General Council 42 meeting held in Corner Brook, Newfoundland and Labrador. They highlighted some of the key conversations and decisions that happened during that meeting including: actions taken on the Comprehensive Review; the full communion agreement with the United Church of Christ (USA) and mutual ministry agreements with churches in the Philippines and Korea; a commitment to divest from fossil fuels; a renewed commitment to education about Israel and Palestine; the apology to the LBTT2Q community; and follow up to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

In particular, the Executive wanted to ensure the Conference was finding ways to continue following up on reconciliation and right relationship work.

MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

The President presented a report on the work of the Executive task group that considered the place of the Mission and Vision Statements in the life of the Conference Executive.

It was suggested that in the Mission Statement the word ‘congregations’ be replaced with ‘communities of faith,’ acknowledging that the church can anticipate several different kinds of faithful gatherings and organized groups in the future.

It was pointed out that there is currently no way to measure the “health” of communities of faith, which makes it difficult to measure effectiveness. The Ends policies provide goals which are more concrete and measurable. It was felt that the Mission Statement, though, still provides focus and value for the Conference and should be maintained.

M/S/C (Cari Copeman-Haynes/Ruth Stebbing)

that the wording of the Mission Statement be changed from “congregations” to “communities of faith.”

ETHICAL INVESTMENTS Doug Goodwin presented a report on Ethical Investments (*Appendix III, page _____*) outlining the present steps and proposed course of action for divesting from fossil fuel businesses. Despite the difficulties of doing so, the goal is to be completely divested of fossil fuels within a short time. He reported that the present approach is to continue to work with the Conference's investment manager, Connor, Clark & Lunn, to develop pooled funds that do not include the major fossil fuel companies. Close contact is also being maintained with the General Council and the United Church Foundation as they, too, seek to divest from fossil fuels.

LUNCH The meeting adjourned for lunch.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY MONITORING: ENDS

The Executive Secretary Monitoring Report: Ends (Appendix IV, page _____) was presented and discussed. The Minutes record only discussion initiated from questions or comments by members or items important to be in the Minutes.

Presbyteries It was noted that the decisions of the General Council mean that the future of Presbyteries is in doubt. Nevertheless, it is prudent to continue working with Presbyteries as they are presently constituted, recognizing that almost all are presently discussing ways of "being Presbytery" differently. Doug Goodwin will raise the possibility later in this meeting of holding a gathering of the Presbyteries for early in the new year to discuss ways of working together in the future.

Non-Congregational Ministries The decision of the United Church Health Services Society to turn over the Wrinch Memorial Hospital and clinic work in Hazelton to the Interior Health Authority has received a small amount of opposition which the Society is dealing with locally.

Church Leadership The transition to "Effective Leadership" where responsibility for pastoral relations work was transferred from the Presbyteries to the Conference has gone very well, although not without some difficulties. The general response to this initiative has been that it has created a more positive and effective system for pastoral relations.

The Executive expressed its appreciation for the establishment of the Charlotte Sullivan Designated Lay Ministry Training program which is now underway.

It also expressed its hope that training in children's ministry might also become available in the Conference.

General Council 42 Doug Goodwin reported that the Presbyteries in BC Conference were asked whether they would be interested in exploring moving from a four court governance system to a three court one, as adopted by the General Council 42 meeting. All ten Presbyteries responded positively with varying levels of enthusiasm. Doug suggested that representatives from each presbytery with some members of Executive could gather and explore this possibility.

*M/S/C (Graham Brownmiller/Nancy O'Higgins)
that the Conference initiate a process with the Presbyteries to explore a new governance model based on three courts rather than four.*

The Centre at Naramata It was reported that The Centre at Naramata has a loan of \$2.75 million from BC Conference. The Conference is committed to not calling in the loan before decisions are made about the future of the Centre, expected in late spring or early summer 2016.

Property Development A proposal for a new model for property development where the Conference would serve as developer with BC Housing as the financial partner will be proposed later in this meeting.

Staffing Doug Goodwin reported that although the five year contract with Irene Champagne to provide psychotherapeutic services in four northern communities has come to an end, he has arranged to pay for work she may do from time to time on behalf of the Conference.

M/S/C (Jeff Seaton/Ruth Stebbing)

that the “Executive Secretary Monitoring Report: Ends” be accepted.

MONITORING: EXECUTIVE LIMITATIONS

The Executive Secretary Monitoring Report: Executive Limitations (Appendix V, page _____) was presented and discussed.

DSL – Update Doug updated the Executive on the processes now used to place people on the DSL-Voluntary and the DSL-Disciplinary lists. Processes have changed because Presbyteries in BC Conference no longer deal with matters of discipline.

Administer the Sacraments Doug reported that he granted licenses to administer the sacraments (*Manual* I.2.4.1) to:

- (March 26, 2015) Simon LeSieur, Candidate Supply within West Vancouver United Church, West Vancouver, BC;
- (September 14, 2015) Jane Clarke, Designated Lay Minister, within Knox United Church, Fernie, for the duration of her appointment.
- (September 14, 2015) Colleen Blair, Designated Lay Minister, within Highlands United Church, North Vancouver, BC for the duration of her appointment.
- (September 14, 2015) Ron Malmas, Sacraments Elder, within St. Andrew’s United Church, Williams Lake, BC, for one year or until a member of the Order of Ministry or a Designated Lay Minister has been appointed or settled in the Charge.
- (September 29, 2015) Linda McLaren, Candidate Supply, within Rosedale United Church, Rosedale, BC, for the duration of her appointment.

Interim Ministers Doug reported that on June 9, 2015, he redesignated Scott Swanson and Richard Bott, and on October 22, 2015 he redesignated Erin Sterling, as Interim Ministers (*Manual* I.1.7).

Policy Monitoring When reporting on the General Constraint policy, Doug noted that he was not in compliance since a Conference practice was adopted which would not compel interim ministers to undergo a new criminal records check each time they began a new appointment. Doug also noted that he was not yet totally compliant with the Personnel policy since he was behind on the annual reviews of staff.

Doug reported he was in compliance with the Financial Condition, Protection of Assets, Grants and Loans, and Communication and Support to the Executive policies.

It was noted that clarification on what constituted “press releases” in the Communication and Support to the Executive policy would be helpful.

M/S/C (Ken Fanning/Judith Hardcastle)

that the “Executive Secretary Monitoring Report: Executive Limitations” be accepted.

**CONFERENCE
ASSETS**

Doug Goodwin presented a printed report on the use of Conference assets in the operating budget (Appendix VI, page _____). He offered two scenarios, the first which would not seriously risk Conference assets over the next seven year period and a second which would spend more assets and potentially put them at significant risk.

After discussion, it was decided that the Executive was comfortable adopting the higher risk scenario (Scenario 2) as long as assets were monitored carefully with the goal of adjusting expenditures should the assets actually decrease at high risk levels.

M/S/C (Ken Fanning/Ian Fraser)

that Scenario 2 be used for planning and budgeting purposes from 2016.

BUDGET 2016

Doug Goodwin presented the “Budget 2016” report (Appendix VII, page _____).

Doug reported that the proposed Budget for 2016 does not contravene any of the limitations of the Budget Executive Limitation policy.

Doug pointed out that the budget numbers presented in the printed report are based on Scenario 1 of the previous report. They will have to be adjusted for the decision just taken which adopted Scenario 2. An increase in the LeaderShift and Total Salaries line can be anticipated when a revised budget is prepared.

M/S/C (Cari Copeman-Haynes/Carol Martin)

that the Budgeting Policy monitoring report be accepted.

M/S/C (Ken Fanning/Ruth Stebbing)

that the budget for 2016 as provided in the Budget 2016 report be adopted with the understanding that actual 2016 expenditures will change as “Scenario 2” is incorporated into budget plans.

AUDIT

Doug Goodwin reminded the Executive that at its March 2015 meeting it appointed Rolfe Benson as auditor for the 2015 financial statements.

**APPOINTMENT OF
AUDIT COMMITTEE**

M/S/C (Cari Copeman-Haynes/Cheryl Swedburg)

that the Executive Financial Audit Committee (Ken Fanning, Keith Simmonds, Ian Fraser) be authorized to review the final audited financial statements 2015 when received in order to accept them on behalf of the Executive or to do otherwise as they deem appropriate.

**PROPERTY AND
AFFORDABLE
HOUSING**

Doug Goodwin presented a proposal that the Conference develop an affordable housing development and management project that would partner with congregations and with BC Housing. The goals of the project would be: to help revitalize congregations, both property-rich and property-poorer ones, by providing new buildings and sources of income; to provide affordable housing for the community.

One of the additional benefits of developing and holding property is that the ongoing property values of the developments would be much greater than could be obtained by selling the properties for development. This would enhance asset values for future generations.

It was noted that the Conference would have to take on the management of the properties and rentals, likely by hiring professional assistance.

M/S/C (Ian Fraser/Ken Fanning)
that the Executive approve in principle the establishment of an affordable housing development and management project.

DINNER

The meeting adjourned for dinner.

POLICY REVIEW

Monitoring Executive Secretary Performance Policy:

M/S/C (Ian Fraser/Jean Macdonald)
that the Monitoring Executive Secretary Performance Policy not include #5: “A tri-annual review of the work of the Executive Secretary shall be simply a summary of the accumulated monitoring reports, using the same criteria and methods used for monitoring.”

M/S/C (Cari Copeman-Haynes/Ian Fraser)
that the Monitoring Executive Secretary Performance Policy not include #4: “At each regular meeting the Executive Secretary will present an analytical report detailing compliance to each Ends policy and to scheduled Executive Limitations policies.”

Executive Secretary Monitoring Schedule Policy:

M/S/C (Ian Fraser/Jeff Seaton)
that in the Executive Secretary Monitoring Schedule policy, the word “analytical” be removed so that the opening statement would read, “At each regular meeting the Executive Secretary will present a report detailing compliance to each Ends policy and to scheduled Executive Limitation policies.”

Doug Goodwin will check the Executive Secretary Monitoring Schedule policy to ensure the policies scheduled are up to date.

Doug noted that several entrepreneurial ministries have emerged that are not congregationally based and are responsible for obtaining their own funding. Employment, tax receipting and accountability issues have arisen which have meant the Conference has become involved in ways not anticipated by existing policies and Ends. He suggested that some thought regarding new “emerging ministries” would be helpful going forward.

POLICY REVISION

Doug Goodwin reported that the phrase “Specifically Designated Strategic Ministries” (Ends B.3) presently refers to Youth and Young Adults, Campus Ministries, and Ethnic and Intercultural Ministries. The Executive agreed that this understanding was sufficient at this time.

During discussion, the Executive expressed a wish to hear more about the work of Ethnic and Intercultural Ministries. It was decided to request a more fulsome report for the next meeting of the Executive.

EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW

It was noted that the Executive conducts an external organizational review once every three years. Three reviews have been conducted since the inauguration of this policy (Monitoring Executive Secretary Performance), and one is due in 2016. It was decided that a task group made up of Cari Copeman-Haynes, Keith Simmonds, and Ian Fraser would research possible reviewers and bring a recommendation to the Executive at its next meeting.

REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP

Doug Goodwin reported that refugee support work in BC Conference has for many years been coordinated and supported by Maggie Hosgood and Heather MacDonald as volunteers. The Conference has responded to the recent upsurge of interest in

refugee sponsorship by increasing the Emergency Fund used to help refugee families and by providing \$10,000 to assist with the training and support of refugee sponsorship groups.

Doug also proposed a Refugee Assurance program, monies from which would be available to United Church groups sponsoring refugees if they were unable to meet their financial obligations. The intention of the program would be to reduce the risk for groups so more might be willing to undertake the work of sponsorship.

M/S/C (Jean Macdonald/Nancy O'Higgins)

that the Executive approve the allocation of \$50,000 for a Refugee Assurance program.

SPRING MEETING

The President had been in contact with Kootenay Presbytery and received an invitation to hold the next Conference Executive meeting in Nelson, BC. It was agreed to accept the invitation.

M/S/C (Rob Smith/Nancy O'Higgins)

that the Executive meet in May 2016 in Nelson.

NOVEMBER 2016 MEETING

M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Graham Brownmiller)
that the Executive meet November 3-5, 2016.

NEXT MEETING PRIORITIES

The Executive discussed what it wanted to ensure is on the agenda for its March 2016 meeting:

- Review the "Communication and Support to Conference Executive" policy to clarify the meaning of "press releases."
- Receive a plan on how to track the expenditures of assets over the next five years.
- Hear back from the task group which is doing the initial planning for the organizational review in 2016 – Cari, Keith and Ian.
- Finalize a firm date for May 2016 meeting – Keith and Doug.
- Update on the consultation with the Presbyteries on moving from four to three courts.
- Listening to the Ownership – planning for future "Listening."
- Ethnic & Intercultural Ministries – a more fulsome report on work presently being undertaken.

REVIEW OF MEETING

Ian Fraser reviewed the responses from the earlier small group discussions, and noted that the results would be a good resource for the President-Elect as she plans for future Listening work. It was suggested that the focus of the next year could be on theological reflection in order to stay grounded during this present time of change.

ADJOURNMENT

M/S/C (Rob Smith)

that the meeting adjourn following the Vancouver School of Theology reopening ceremony on November 14, 2015.

WORSHIP

The President led in Eucharistic worship.

VST REOPENING

On Saturday, November 14, 2015, the Executive gathered at the Vancouver School of Theology to take part in its reopening after undergoing a move and major renovations this past year. It then ended with lunch together.

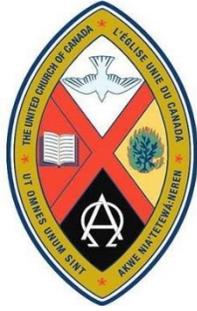
NEXT MEETINGS

March 10-12, 2016 (Executive – Burnaby)

May 2016 (Nelson)

June 4, 2016 (Celebration of Ministry – West Vancouver United Church)

November 3-5, 2016 (Executive – Burnaby)



BC Conference Executive

Keith Simmonds, President

Rev. G. Douglas Goodwin, Executive Secretary
