
MINUTES OF
THE EXECUTIVE OF BC CONFERENCE
The United Church of Canada
March 10-11, 2016
The Mountain View Room, Burnaby, BC

- PRESENT** Graham Brownmiller, Cari Copeman-Haynes, Ken Fanning, Ian Fraser, Doug Goodwin (Executive Secretary), Judith Hardcastle, Wayne Hughes, Everest Kao, Jean Macdonald, Kathy MacKean, Carol Martin, Nancy O’Higgins, Keith Simmonds (President), Rob Smith, Ruth Stebbing, Cheryl Swedburg, Jim White
- REGRETS** Murray Gordon, Ray Jones, Jeff Seaton, Tayana Simpson, 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-Elect, Cari Copeman-Haynes, 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, WORSHIP AND GROUP BUILDING** Cari Copeman-Haynes noted that the President, Keith Simmonds, could not attend the meeting this evening but planned to be present all day Friday. After a brief welcome she led worship based upon three greetings from the letters of Paul. During worship she had members meet in small groups and discuss which biblical greeting felt most appropriate for the Conference at this time. The members then returned to the full group and crafted a greeting, addressing BC Conference. Cari will review the address which will then be distributed through the Conference.
- AGENDA** The President-Elect introduced the proposed agenda. Doug explained that this meeting is shorter than our usual March meetings because the work on Ends policies has reached a stage where much less time is needed for them. He also noted that both he and Katie Purych were leaving on an exposure trip to Guatemala late on Saturday and an earlier end to the meeting would help them better prepare.
- M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Nancy O’Higgins)
that the agenda as presented be adopted (Appendix I, page ____).*
- MINUTES** *M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Ken Fanning)
that the minutes of the November 12-14, 2015 BC Conference Executive meeting be adopted.*
- CORRESPONDENCE REPORT** Doug Goodwin presented a printed Correspondence Report. He noted that the President will also be presenting another piece of correspondence on Saturday that he received the past week regarding interfaith work.
- M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Rob Smith)
that the Correspondence Report (Appendix II, page ____) be received and its recommendations adopted.*
- LISTENING TO THE OWNERS** Cari Copeman-Haynes spoke about Respectful Communication guidelines and led an exercise, inspired by Eric Law, in reflecting on Acts 3: 1-10. She asked members to

consider this text by questioning what it might be calling the BC Conference Executive to do, be, or change. Discussion will continue on these questions will continue when Listening to the Ownership resumes on Friday.

ADJOURNMENT The meeting adjourned for the night.

FRIDAY, MARCH 11, 2016

PRESIDENT President Keith Simmonds chaired the remainder of the meeting.

WORSHIP The meeting began with morning worship led by the President based on Mark 12: 28-31 and the question “who is our neighbor?”

PRESBYTERY CONSULTATION Doug Goodwin reported on the Presbytery Consultation held in February to explore the openness of the Presbyteries to move toward a Three Court Model. He presented the document “Consultation Affirmations” (Appendix III, page ___) which is a summary of the results of the gathering. A number of Conference Executive members participated in the consultation as Presbytery representatives.

Both Doug and the members reported a positive response and energy from participants in the gathering. There was recognition that most of the Presbyteries are already initiating changes in the way they operate that reflect the general directions suggested by the Comprehensive Review report.

It was noted that during this time of anxiety and uncertainty it would be important for the Conference Executive to be, as far as possible, a “non-anxious presence.”

It was recognized that the General Council and the Consultation Affirmations did not say very much about what “Clusters” might look like and what powers they might have. Clarification of the role of Clusters will be important going forward.

Doug reported that he will continue following up on the Consultation as outlined in the Consultation Affirmations document. The Executive can expect a clearer plan for moving forward at its May meeting.

ETHNIC AND INTERCULTURAL MINISTRIES

Glen Davis, contractor for Ethnic and Intercultural Ministries, joined the meeting.

Glen spoke about the work of both Ethnic Ministries and Intercultural Ministries. Ethnic Ministries focuses on supporting congregations and their ministers that worship and work primarily in languages other than English. Intercultural Ministries focuses upon educational work to help all congregations become more diverse and supportive of the many different cultures in their midst.

In discussion, it was noted that support for ethnic ministries from the General Council has decreased significantly over the past 15 years, putting more onus on support from the Presbyteries and Conference. Ethnic congregations often feel isolated from the work of the wider church and have trouble engaging it because of language and cultural differences. Direct connection and consultation with ethnic ministry leadership is needed to help sustain good relationships with the church.

The intercultural work functions more like a “network” of people who have a passion for practicing and promoting the ideals of intercultural ministry. Workshops with Eric Law have been instrumental in helping get better clarity about what being “intercultural” might mean for the church. The General Council has also been supportive of intercultural work.

It was noted that some congregations host smaller groups of non-English speaking people who, while not constituted as congregations, nevertheless meet together for worship and other ministry. These situations share some of the characteristics of both ethnic and intercultural ministries where some forms of separation and some forms of integration are needed.

Doug was asked to provide more clarity on the structure and goals of this ministry at a future meeting of the Executive.

The President thanked Glen for his work and presence at this meeting.

**PROK
RELATIONSHIP**

Doug Goodwin reported that South Gyunggi Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) has extended an invitation to BC Conference to explore entering into a partnership with them. This would be modeled on relationships already recently entered into between Toronto Conference and Seoul Presbytery, and Riverbend Presbytery (Saskatchewan Conference) and Incheon Presbytery.

Doug reported that in order to be respectful to the Korean invitation he has already responded positively to the invitation. Plans for visits between BC Conference and South Gyunggi Presbytery for late 2016 and early 2017 are just beginning to be developed.

The Executive heartily endorsed this initiative.

LUNCH

The meeting adjourned for lunch.

**PRESIDENT'S
REPORT**

Following lunch President Keith Simmonds presented a printed report (Appendix IV, page ___) and spoke about the work he has been doing as Conference President since the last meeting of the Executive. In particular he has been publicly advocating for a reduction in hydro rates which are adversely affecting low income families.

He reported that some ecumenical partners have been asking the United Church to take a stand on physician-assisted dying. He has responded by emphasizing the many different opinions within the church at the moment on this matter.

Keith reflected on the ability of the President to visit the church, enabling him to both learn from and witness the many ways it is helping people. He has found that the church is still appreciated in the wider community.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY MONITORING: ENDS

The Executive Secretary Monitoring Report: Ends (Appendix V, 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

Most of the Presbyteries within the Conference are presently initiating significant change in the way they operate. While there is some stress because of the number of changes, in general the mood is good and the Presbyteries continue to do their existing jobs well. Doug Goodwin noted that the Presbytery Consultation on moving from a four court to a three court system indicated a large desire for change so this area of the Conference's work might look different in the medium future. Doug noted that the kinds of changing already happening would have been almost inconceivable only a short time ago.

**Wrinch Memorial
Hospital**

It was reported that the Wrinch Memorial Hospital and clinic will be turned over from the United Church Health Services Society to Northern Health at the end of March

2016. Most, but not all, of the property, which is held by the General Council, will also be transferred. The President and Executive Secretary will attend a celebratory farewell in Hazelton on March 30-31, 2016.

LeaderShift With Keith Howard's retirement this spring, Treena Duncan will provide leadership for the LeaderShift program. Plans are presently being made to ensure this work can continue on a high level.

Cost The report presented alternative financial forecasts of Conference assets to 2022 based on two premises: continued property sales in which the Conference benefits; and no future benefits to the Conference from property sales. The forecasts show that if property sales continue to benefit the Conference, present expenditure levels can continue with only a modest decrease in overall assets by 2022. If they do not, then the Conference will have to make major expenditure adjustments in the near future.

Affordable Housing Doug Goodwin reported that in order to work with BC Housing to build and operate affordable housing, changes to the existing PDC constitution or the establishment of a new society would have to happen.

Property Sale Assets Doug reported that the assets from the Capilano United Church property sale were distributed based on a common agreement between former members of the congregation, Vancouver-Burrard Presbytery, and the Conference. This has resulted in grants to church organizations, as well as the establishment of significant funds for justice and children's work, both of which are to be managed by the Conference.

He reported that since decisions about the use of the assets were made as mutual decisions with the two other groups, the distribution of the assets did not necessarily follow the Conference's own priorities and interests, although these were part of the decision-making process.

It was decided that the Conference Executive would discuss at its next meeting the decision-making processes and use of assets from church properties in which the Conference might be involved.

Emerging Ministries Doug alerted the Executive to the recent situation of new ministries emerging that are funded from ProVision, Seeds of Hope, Edge and other grants. Although funded, these new ministries do not have legal standing which would enable them to provide tax receipts or allow staff to remain contributing to the United Church pension fund. As a short-term measure the Conference has employed two such people so they have both legal standing and oversight. In the future a new way of providing a home for such ministries will likely have to be found.

St. Paul's, Kelowna The present situation at St. Paul's, Kelowna, where their major development project fell through, was discussed. Conference's role related to such development projects was discussed. Presently there is no legal or capacity ability of the Conference to be involved in all such projects. Doug pointed out that a number of other such projects have been successful. Property development work which does not directly involve the Conference will continue to be monitored by the Conference to gain insight and learning for the future.

Staffing Bill Laurie is presently moving on to long-term disability. A search will soon begin for a new Conference Minister for Victoria and Comox-Nanaimo Presbyteries. In the meantime, Thomas Dennett will continue to provide service. A new Conference

Minister for Fraser and Westminster Presbyteries should be hired soon after the Conference Executive meeting. Marc Coulombe will continue to provide service for Vancouver-Burrard and Vancouver South Presbyteries. A search continues for a Conference Minister for Kootenay Presbytery to replace George Meier who retired at the end of 2015. Keith Howard is retiring in the early summer of 2016. Doug Goodwin is planning for a sabbatical in 2016. He is taking two weeks immediately following this meeting to travel on a church education tour in Guatemala. He has also arranged to work with Alan Roxburgh who has written extensively on “the missional church” and, more recently, on the role of denominations in the emerging church.

M/S/C (Graham Brownmiller/Ruth Stebbing)

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

MONITORING: EXECUTIVE LIMITATIONS

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

Administer the Sacraments On December 7, 2015 the License to Administer the Sacraments of Ron Malmas, former Sacraments Elder at St. Andrew’s United Church, Williams Lake, was revoked to enable Brenda Smith to assume that role. This was not a matter of discipline. Only one Sacraments Elder is permitted to serve in a pastoral charge at any one time.

December 7, 2015 a License to Administer the Sacraments to Brenda Smith, Sacraments Elder at St. Andrew’s United Church, Williams Lake, was granted 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.

On February 25, 2016 a License to Administer the Sacraments to Pamela Jeffery, Designated Lay Minister at Shaughnessy Heights United Church, Vancouver, was granted for the duration of her appointment.

Policy Monitoring Doug Goodwin reported compliance in all areas of the Financial Condition and Emergency Succession Limitation policies.

M/S/C (Cari Copeman-Haynes/Judith Hardcastle)

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

GENERAL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE Graham Brownmiller and Jean Macdonald reported on the work of the General Council Executive.

The GC Executive has adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for its reconciliation work with aboriginal peoples. This will have many implications for policy and work over the next years. In 2016 the courts of the church have been asked by the General Council Executive to read the United Church’s apologies and responses as part of their meetings.

The next General Council Executive meeting will not be face-to-face but will be happening via teleconferencing. This is part of broader cost-saving measures being undertaken by the General Council.

A Business Chair and a Worship Chair are being sought to provide leadership for the next General Council meeting, to be held in 2018.

GENERAL MEETING Doug Goodwin reported that plans are being made to hold the 2017 General Meeting at the University of BC, Vancouver, and the 2018 General Meeting in Penticton.

Discussion followed on the value of holding the General Meeting outside of the Lower Mainland, noting that the last General Meeting in 2015 was held in Whistler, not far from Vancouver. Meeting locations are chosen based on a combination of values which include space requirements, general comfort and services, financial value, and the long-standing practice of changing the location for every meeting.

Further discussion questioned a number of the usual practices of General Meetings, including meeting as often as we do (two meetings in a three year period), the levels of comfort and service provided, the payment of all participant costs, and the desire to meet as a whole Conference rather than more regularly in regions of the province.

It was decided that present planning was acceptable but that another look at a potential Kamloops location for the 2017 meeting should happen.

It was also decided that the Executive should engage at a future meeting in more conversation about expectations for the General Meeting, perhaps guided in part by whatever changes might happen in the church's court system.

POLICY REVIEW

Following the schedule for policy review, the Executive looked at four Executive Limitation policies.

Treatment of Beneficiaries: it was noted that the phrase "and might not be available" in statement #5 was ambiguous and not likely to be able to be fulfilled fully.

*M/S/C (Cari Copeman-Haynes/Jean Macdonald)
that statement #5 now read, "Fail to establish a clear understanding of what core products and services are available from BC Conference."*

No changes were made to the Emergency Succession policy.

No changes were made to the Communication and Support to Executive policy. Doug Goodwin clarified that his understanding of what is meant by a "press release" was a large-scale public announcement intended or anticipated to generate public response. Smaller announcements and information sharing using social media, web page or email are not considered to be "press releases."

No changes were made to the Vendor Relations policy.

CANDIDATES FOR MINISTRY

Doug Goodwin reported that motions related to Candidates for ministry are usually made at the General Meeting of the Conference but in years when a General Meeting is not held, as in 2016, the Conference Executive makes the motions.

*M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Graham Brownmiller)
that we do not take a secret ballot for the Candidates' motions.*

*M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Wayne Hughes)
that Mary Nichol be ordained by BC Conference subject to satisfactory completion of her Supervised Ministry Experience and all educational requirements.*

*M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Wayne Hughes)
that Karen Hollis be ordained by BC Conference subject to satisfactory completion of her Supervised Ministry Experience and all educational requirements.*

*M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Wayne Hughes)
that Simon LeSieur be ordained by BC Conference subject to satisfactory completion of his Supervised Ministry Experience and all educational requirements.*

*M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Wayne Hughes)
that Scott Reynolds be ordained by BC Conference subject to satisfactory completion of his Supervised Ministry Experience and all educational requirements.*

*M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Wayne Hughes)
that Linda McLaren be ordained by BC Conference subject to satisfactory completion of her Supervised Ministry Experience and all educational requirements.*

*M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Wayne Hughes)
that Sue Rodgers be ordained by BC Conference subject to satisfactory completion of her Supervised Ministry Experience and all educational requirements.*

*M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Wayne Hughes)
that Rhian Walker be ordained by BC Conference subject to satisfactory completion of her Supervised Ministry Experience and all educational requirements.*

*M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Wayne Hughes)
that Elaine Julian be ordained by BC Conference subject to satisfactory completion of her Supervised Ministry Experience and all educational requirements.*

*M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Wayne Hughes)
that Kathleen Barber be recognized as a Designated Lay Minister by BC Conference subject to satisfactory completion of her Supervised Ministry Experience and all educational requirements.*

LISTENING TO THE OWNERSHIP

Cari Copeman-Haynes listed the insights that emerged from the conversations held the previous evening. From the greetings of Paul she identified the importance of our personal grounding in God and Christ; that we grow together and suffer together; and that we are to “take it out to the world.”

She noted that the reflections on Acts 3 led to questions of how the Conference views its resources (its “silver and gold”), what gifts the Conference might offer, and what kind of work and relationships might have to be developed if “silver and gold” were not available. She noted that the gift provided in the story was both unexpected and unasked for but proved to be the transformative one.

EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW

Ian Fraser reported on behalf of himself, Cari Copeman-Haynes, and Keith Simmonds on their work to plan an external organizational review. 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.

He reported that they have been trying to engage Dan Hotchkiss as reviewer with the hope that he might not only be able to do the review but to also provide advise about our present practice and, perhaps, provide a workshop for the wider church community. The Executive encouraged the group to continue with this plan.

SPRING 2017 MEETING

*M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Rob Smith)
that the Executive meet March 9-11, 2017 and that the Moderator be invited to attend.*

NEXT MEETING PRIORITIES

The Executive named priorities for its next meeting in May:

- read the United Church apologies and responses; review General Council plans for follow-up to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations

- spend significant time “listening” with Kootenay Presbytery people
- receive and review Presbytery reports
- explore feelings of isolation among some in the Conference
- receive information on plans for LeaderShift
- hear about follow up on the Presbytery Consultation and Affirmations
- hear more on General Council developments
- monitor property sales and Conference property development work

QUESTIONS FOR LISTENING

A list of questions were gathered which could be used during the Listening to the Owners time at the May meeting of the Executive in Nelson.

REVIEW OF MEETING

Ian Fraser reviewed the Executive meeting. He asked members in small groups to identify what had worked well at the meeting, what would have been good to have more of, what we could have had less of, and what was missing.

He had also kept track of the amount of time spent in each of the following four areas of work: Listening; Planning; Monitoring; and Other. He noted that the amount of time spent in each area was as follows:

Total hours:	10.6 (100%)
Listening:	2.6 (24%)
Planning:	1.6 (15%)
Monitoring:	2.4 (23%)
Other:	4.0 (38%)

Ian suggested that 20% for Other would be a reasonable expectation for most meetings and that the Executive could work to move closer to this amount.

ADJOURNMENT

*M/S/C (Doug Goodwin)
that the meeting adjourn following Eucharistic Worship.*

WORSHIP

The President led in Eucharistic worship.

NEXT MEETINGS

May 26-28, 2016 (Nelson)
June 4, 2016 (Celebration of Ministry – West Vancouver United Church)
November 3-5, 2016 (Executive – Burnaby)
March 9-11, 2017 (with Moderator)
General Meeting – May 25-28, 2017



BC Conference Executive

Keith Simmonds, President

Rev. G. Douglas Goodwin, Executive Secretary