
**MINUTES OF
THE EXECUTIVE OF BC CONFERENCE
The United Church of Canada
May 26-28, 2016
Nelson United Church, Nelson, BC**

- PRESENT** Derry Bott, Ken Fanning, Ian Fraser, Doug Goodwin (Executive Secretary), Murray Gordon, Judith Hardcastle, Ray Jones, Jean Macdonald, Kathy MacKean, Carol Martin, Jeff Seaton, Keith Simmonds (President), Tayana Simpson, Rob Smith, Ruth Stebbing, Cheryl Swedburg, Jim White
- REGRETS** Graham Brownmiller, Cari Copeman-Haynes, Wayne Hughes, Everest Kao, Nancy O’Higgins, 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** Following a dinner with guests from Kootenay Presbytery, the President welcomed the Executive members and visitors to the meeting. Several people from Kootenay Presbytery joined the meeting remotely.
- The President acknowledged that the meeting was being held on the traditional unceded territory of the Sinixt Nation.
- The President explained that August 2016 marks the 30th anniversary of the United Church’s apology for the role it played in the colonization and destruction of indigenous cultures and spiritual practices in Canada. Keith led the Executive and guests in reading the 1986 Apology and the 1988 Response to the Apology. Some time was spent in reflection before the President closed in prayer.
- LISTENING TO THE OWNERS: CIRCLE CONVERSATION** Approximately fifteen people from Kootenay Presbytery joined the Executive in person or by remote live video to talk about the life of the United Church in Kootenay Presbytery.
- While the stories varied, some of the common themes were: small congregations which are still shrinking where one or two deaths or departures make a big difference; conversations are ongoing about the reconfiguration of pastoral charges; initiatives and dreams of reaching out into the wider community in partnerships and community conversations; some anxiety about the future of broader church structures which may not promote connections, especially between remote areas; buildings which are both a burden and an asset for community engagement.
- The ability of Kootenay Presbytery to connect distant people and communities well was affirmed. People also expressed appreciation for the chance to tell their stories to the Executive.
- ADJOURNMENT** The meeting adjourned for the night.

FRIDAY, MAY 27, 2016

- WORSHIP** The President led in worship which featured a discussion related to seven traditional indigenous teachings.
- AGENDA** The President introduced the proposed agenda.
*M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Rob Smith)
that the agenda as presented be adopted (Appendix I, page ____).*
- MINUTES** *M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Cheryl Swedburg)
that the minutes of the March 10-11, 2016 BC Conference Executive meeting be adopted.*
- CORRESPONDENCE REPORT** Doug Goodwin presented a printed Correspondence Report. He reminded the members of Executive that correspondence is not distributed but is made available to Executive members at any time upon request.
*M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/ Ian Fraser)
that the Correspondence Report (Appendix II, page ____) be received and its recommendations adopted.*
- AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2015** Ken Fanning reported that the Conference Executive Audit Committee met with the auditors on May 12, 2016 to review the Conference audited financial statements 2015 and the audit report. He recommended the acceptance of the audited statements.

Doug Goodwin acknowledged the work that David Nanton has been doing in Nellie Tang's medical absence and led the Executive in expressing its thanks.
*M/S/C (Ken Fanning/Ian Fraser)
that the BC Conference Executive accept the 2015 audited financial statements.*
- APPOINTMENT OF FINANCIAL AUDITOR 2016** It was noted that the firm of Rolfe Benson has been auditing the financial records of BC Conference since the 2012 statements.
*M/S/C (Ken Fanning/Judith Hardcastle)
that Rolfe Benson be requested to conduct the audit of the 2016 financial statements.*
- EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW** Ian Fraser reported that he, Cari Copeman-Haynes and Keith Simmonds have been in conversation with Dan Hotchkiss, author of *Governance and Ministry*, to undertake the external organizational review. They have reached a tentative agreement to do the review. In addition, he would provide an evaluation of the work of the Executive, as well as giving a public workshop on governance in the church. While the review would begin immediately, primarily remotely, the final reports and workshops would be provided in the fall in conjunction with the November meeting of the Executive.

The reviewer will have confidential access to Conference information. Keith Simmonds suggested that he, Cari Copeman-Haynes, and a third person be available to gather additional information for the reviewer, if needed. Carol Martin volunteered to be the third member of that group.
*M/S/C (Ian Fraser/Jeff Seaton)
that BC Conference contract with Dan Hotchkiss to conduct the external organizational review, as well as provide the additional agreed upon services as reported.*

MODERATOR VISITS

The President reported on visits the Moderator, the Right Rev. Jordan Cantwell, is making in BC Conference. Her goals include a visit to every aboriginal church community in the country. She will be attending the BC Conference Native Ministries Council meeting in Prince Rupert in March 2017.

Jim White expressed the hope that the Moderator will offer the United Church's apologies personally to the communities she visits. The President will be in touch with the Moderator's office to see if this is part of her plan.

The Moderator's Official Visit to BC Conference will be March 10-15, 2017, which includes attending the Conference Executive meeting. A large gathering in the Lower Mainland, followed by travel outside the Lower Mainland, will also be part of her visit. It was suggested that a visit to Cariboo Presbytery would be appreciated. Doug Goodwin will follow up with the Presbytery.

PROK RELATIONSHIP

Doug Goodwin reported on present plans for a visit between BC Conference and South Gyunggi Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK). Dates for the visit in Korea have been set: October 19-27, 2016. A return visit in BC is expected to be planned for the spring of 2017.

Participants in the trip have not been established yet. While some visitors will go by virtue of office, it is hoped that some of the diversity of the Conference might also be represented, perhaps by including aboriginal and youth participation. The initial visits will be to get to know one another better and to explore possible areas of cooperation and mutual learning.

INVESTMENTS AND FOSSIL FUELS

Doug Goodwin presented a printed report "Executive Secretary Monitoring – Ends" (Appendix III, page ___) that included a section on Investment Policy and Fossil Fuels. The report offered four investment options related to fossil fuels.

The President proposed that the options not be discussed at this time but that the Executive further educate itself about investments and fossil fuels with the matter brought back again to the November 2016 meeting of the Executive.

Discussion followed on the value of further education and on the kind of balanced education the Executive might desire in order to make a well-informed choice.

M/S/C (Jean Macdonald/Carol Martin)

that the discussion regarding Investment Policy and Fossil Fuels be postponed definitely to the November 2016 meeting of the Conference Executive; and that in preparation the Executive engage in an education process in order to better understand these issues.

The President, Ruth Stebbing, and Jean Macdonald will gather educational materials and arrange an educational process.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Jeff Seaton offered a theological reflection based on the story in Mark 12: 15-17 of Jesus eating with "sinners and tax collectors."

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Keith Simmonds read his report (later distributed) (Appendix IV, page ___) on his work as President since the last meeting of the Conference Executive. He has visited in Prince Rupert Presbytery, attended the Native Ministries Council meeting in Gitsegukla and the Island Time youth event at Camp Pringle, visited Kamloops United Church, and participated in the national gathering of Conference Presidents and Leading Elders, as well as carrying out several other Presidential functions.

- REMIT PROCESS** Members shared information about the present remit process and the conversations about the remits being held in congregations and presbyteries. Ideas were shared about how best to encourage the governing bodies of pastoral charges, in particular, to vote on the remits. Not voting would be equivalent to a “no” vote since a majority of all pastoral charges need to vote “yes” for a remit to be approved.
- PRESBYTERY REPORTS** Doug Goodwin reminded the meeting that reports from Presbyteries are usually received at the General Meeting of Conference. Without a General Meeting in 2016, these reports need to be received by the Conference Executive. To date seven Presbyteries have submitted printed reports (Appendix V, pages ____).
- M/S/C (Rob Smith/Carol Martin)*
that the Conference Executive receive the reports from the Presbyteries for information.
- Carol Martin distributed information that had been collected by Victoria Presbytery on the establishment and maintenance of places of burial and encouraged congregations and Presbyteries to be well aware of the obligations related to having memorial gardens on their property.
- A printed report from LeaderShift will also be distributed to the Executive for information.
- PRESBYTERY CONSULTATION – AFFIRMATIONS** Doug Goodwin called attention to the section entitled “Presbytery Consultation – ‘Affirmations’” in his printed report “Executive Secretary Monitoring – Ends.”
- He reported that responses from Presbyteries and individuals were helpful in affirming the general directions presently being taken to shift responsibilities between Presbyteries and Conference. They also helped provide more clarity about the future shape of these relationships and where concerns lie.
- He noted that there was general consensus about which responsibilities would move to the Conference or a future Region. Most confusion and concern is centred on the idea of Clusters which were generally acceptable in theory but which lacked any clear description. There was little concern expressed about the development of Networks.
- Doug reminded the meeting that this initiative is not dependent on the result of the Three Court Model remit but can be implemented whether the remit passes or fails. The Executive affirmed the Next Steps in the report which include distributing the report to the Presbyteries, soliciting feedback, and holding a second Presbytery Consultation in the fall to put firm plans into place.
- LUNCH** The meeting adjourned for lunch.
- EDUCATION FOR ENDS: VISIONING** Keith Simmonds introduced Morgan Gould, who then led the members of the Executive in a visioning process to think about the role of the Executive and what its members bring to its work.
- Morgan acknowledged the many changes presently underway or being contemplated in the United Church. He noted that the present situation does not call primarily for organizational change but for systems change that better serves the church and world. Teams and team approaches to issues are important going forward. Morgan asked the Executive to reflect in small groups on what skills, knowledge and background they brought to the “Executive team.” He then summarized some of the best practices of good teams.

Morgan emphasized the importance of communication going forward (“you cannot communicate too much”) and of good relationships. He had Executive members discuss in small groups what questions might be asked of faith communities to better “get their pulse” and discern what role the Conference might have in their lives. He also encouraged the Executive not to ask “what is wrong and how can it be fixed?” but “what is possible and who cares?”

Morgan offered a list of things that the Conference does in its work as a possible way of reframing its purpose and Ends.

Discussion followed on some of the ideas and reflections offered during the afternoon.

Morgan concluded by encouraging the Executive to find where the “energy” of the church is coming from and then link up with it, making the chief foundation the gospel rather than church buildings.

The President thanked Morgan for his work with the Executive.

NARAMATA CENTRE

Doug Goodwin presented a printed report updating the Executive on the Conference’s recent involvement with Naramata Centre and the position presently being taken by the Conference toward the Centre. He reminded the meeting that the Conference is involved in the life and future decisions of the Centre by virtue of being the supervising court that has responsibilities toward societies, and because of the \$2.75 million loan the Conference has extended to the Naramata Centre Society.

Discussion followed on the virtues and deficiencies of the present business plan, “A Vision for the Future,” that has been developed by the Centre’s Board.

The Executive affirmed the present approach of the Conference, that is:

- we not call in our loan at least until the end of 2017;
- we continue to cover the deferred interest payments on the loan by way of an internal grant (approximately \$120,000 annually) at least until the end of 2017; and that
- conversations between us and the Naramata Centre Society continue in the fall of 2016 to help determine the best “next steps” in its mission.

DINNER

The meeting adjourned for dinner.

WORSHIP

The President led in worship.

PROPERTY UPDATES

Doug Goodwin called attention to the Property Development Council Director’s Report which outlined the present property matters being undertaken by the Conference’s Property Resource Team. Seven significant property development projects are presently being planned in partnership with congregations. It is anticipated that actual construction on the West Burnaby site could begin in late fall or early in the new year. Three sites are being planned in partnership with BC Housing which will provide congregational space, congregational income and significant affordable rental housing. Plans for a new governance system which will hold and manage the rental properties are being made.

Although it can still manage to respond to small requests, presently the Property Resource Team does not have time available to participate in any new

redevelopment proposals. It is anticipated that once the present projects move from a planning to a construction phase, new projects will be undertaken.

PROPERTY ASSETS Doug Goodwin presented a printed report “Property Sales and Assets 2007-2015” (Appendix VI, page ___) on the disposition of assets from property sales over the past nine years.

He reported and apologized that he had not been following the provision of Practices and Procedures “Property Development”, section 5, which states, “Final decisions regarding the sale or development of properties and the use of their assets shall belong to the Property Development Council, which shall not without good cause reject the agreements made by management.” He noted that “final” decisions were not made at PDC meetings. Unless otherwise directed by the Executive, he will ensure this provision is followed in the future.

M/S/C (Ian Fraser/Rob Smith)

that the report “BC Conference: Property Sales and Assets 2007-2015” be accepted.

Keith Simmonds suggested that a group gather to give some thought to developing a strategic approach to the use of assets from property sales in which the Conference is involved. Judith Hargraves volunteered to assist in this work.

**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 decisions. Nine decisions regarding candidates were made at the March 2016 meeting of the Executive; two more are needed at this meeting.

M/S/Carried unanimously (Doug Goodwin/Ken Fanning)

that we not take a secret ballot for the Candidates’ motions.

M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Jeff Seaton)

that Debbie Marshall be ordained by BC Conference.

M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Ray Jones)

that Herb Russell be recognized as a Designated Lay Minister by BC Conference.

**SETTLEMENT
REPORT**

Doug Goodwin reminded the meeting that the Settlement Report is usually received and the Ministerial Standing Report adopted by the General Meeting but in the absence of a General Meeting should be dealt with by the Executive.

M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Jeff Seaton)

that the Settlement Report from the Pastoral Relations Working Group be received for information.

**MINISTERIAL
STANDING**

M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Jeff Seaton)

that the Ministerial Standing Report from the Pastoral Relations Working Group be accepted.

ADJOURNMENT

The Executive adjourned for the evening.

**PDC ANNUAL
MEETING**

The Annual Meeting of the Property Development Council was held.

SATURDAY, MAY 28, 2016

WORSHIP

The President led in worship.

**GENERAL COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE**

Jean Macdonald reported on recent work and conversations of the General Council Executive.

She reported that the General Council is compiling an inventory of where wealth is held in the United Church with the goal of later developing a better way of sharing financial resources across the country.

The last General Council Executive meeting was held using Adobe Connect technology. Jean reported that she felt the meeting went very well using the technology.

The present plan for the next General Council meeting is to divide the business parts of the meeting from the more inspirational parts, resulting in a shorter business meeting and a larger Festival of Faith gathering alongside.

Although the budget deficit at the General Council is not as large as anticipated, staff reductions need to continue for the next couple of years. Other costs are also being reduced, including up to 50% of travel costs for meetings.

The work of reconciliation continues to be a priority for the General Council Executive. Jean reported that she is serving on a committee which will continue to explore and promote this initiative.

Doug Goodwin called the Executive's attention to the "Funding a New Model of the Church" remit which seems to have received less attention by the church than other remits. He outlined the vision of the new financing model, its possible ramifications for BC Conference, and how the Conference might be able to respond. Discussion followed on the importance of this remit and how it might reshape the relationships between the courts of the church.

**RECONCILIATION
INITIATIVES**

Keith Simmonds reminded the meeting that the work of reconciliation with aboriginal peoples is a high priority for the United Church. He and others spoke of present and past reconciliation efforts and encouraged the Executive to consider further work.

Jim White expressed appreciation of the work of the Conference to date, particularly for its leadership in gathering the denominations together to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission meeting in Vancouver. Ray Jones used a Gitksan metaphor of floating a grounded canoe to talk about the work needed ahead.

It was noted how valuable it has been in understanding and working toward reconciliation that the aboriginal church in BC remained as a part of BC Conference rather than joining the All Native Circle Conference in 1988.

**CONFERENCE
GENERAL
MEETINGS**

Doug Goodwin reported that we have contracted with The Nest at the University of BC as the location for the 2017 General Meeting of BC Conference.

Discussion was held on the frequency of General Meeting. Presently the Conference meets two out of every three years. Some expressed the opinion that a meeting once every three years would be adequate with opportunities for other events in non-meeting years similar to Festivals of Faith.

It was decided that Executive members would check with people in their constituencies to ascertain their openness to triannual General Meetings with alternate gatherings held in non-General Meeting years. Doug Goodwin will also prepare other questions related to the General Meeting that would be helpful to

hear back from people about. Time at the November 2016 Executive meeting will be spent hearing back.

ADMINISTER THE SACRAMENTS

Doug Goodwin reported that on April 6, 2016 he granted a License to Administer the Sacraments to Ming Yung Chuan, Candidate Supply at Tai-Kong United Church, Vancouver, BC, for the duration of his appointment.

NEXT MEETING PRIORITIES

The Executive named priorities for its next meeting in November:

- receiving the External Organizational Review;
- fossil fuels and investments education and discussion;
- Budget 2017;
- discussion about the frequency of Conference General Meetings;
- discussion on the use of assets from the sales of property;
- review of LeaderShift to date;
- discussion on isolation in ministry.

REVIEW OF MEETING

In small groups members discussed what they liked best about the present meeting and what areas they felt needed improvement. The group responses were gathered up and will be compiled and distributed to members by Katie Purych.

APPRECIATIONS

The President expressed appreciation for the work and commitment of Ian Fraser and Rob Smith, both of whom will be leaving the Executive following this meeting. Ian has finished two consecutive terms while Rob will be moving to London Conference and serving a new pastoral charge.

The meeting also expressed its appreciation of the work of the President in leading the meeting and in representing the Conference between meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

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

WORSHIP

The President led in Eucharistic worship.

NEXT MEETINGS

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



BC Conference Executive

Keith Simmonds, President

Rev. G. Douglas Goodwin, Executive Secretary