

UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
National AOTS Executive Meeting
Minutes of the Conference Call Meeting, Sunday January 17, 2010

The meeting of the 2009 - 2010 National Executive/Council was called to order at 5:00 pm EST by President Jim McKibbin. He opened the meeting with a prayer.

Present on the call were: *Al Anthony, Marvin Bildfell, John Cooke, Harvey Douglas, Dave Morris, Ed Macdonald, Wally McDonald, Jim McKibbin, Ernie Orpin, Lloyd Paul, Gary Ross, Howard Wills, & Jim Upright*

Regrets from: **George Bishop, Ed Macdonald, & Garnet Thompson**

E10-01-01 Agenda - The Agenda as distributed was approved by consensus, with an additional request from Gary Ross.

E10-01-02 Approval of the minutes of November 22, 2009

Motion: *Bildfell/Anthony* That the minutes of Nov. 22 be approved: **Carried**

E10-01-03 Treasurers report and 2010 Budget:

Marvin has distributed a Financial Statement and Budget for 2010. He also sent out comments on the Financial Statement. No further comments from those on line.

Motion: *Morris/Douglas* The Financial report as distributed be accepted **Carried**

Marvin commented on the 2010 Budget the indicated an increase from 2009

Motion: *Bildfell/Ross* The 2010 Budget be approved as distributed **Carried**

E10-01-04 The Dondi Project: Lloyd Paul advised a Steering Committee has been meeting monthly. The new members who participated in last Friday's meeting are: Harvey Douglas, Jim McKibbin, Dave Morris (unable to attend the meeting), and Wally Shoults, by teleconference, plus support from some of the other units from the General Council Office: Gary Kenny, Pat Elson and Omega Bula from the Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit, Bill Steadman of Financial Stewardship and Michael Blair from the Congregational, Educational and Community Ministries Unit. One of the main focuses of the meeting was Fund Raising. John Patterson is Chairing the Steering Committee, Jim Patterson works for the Toronto United Church Council in Fundraising is also on the Committee and had a significant part of the Agenda on Friday as vehicles to reach the 1.3 Million dollar goal were discussed. Certain Men's groups will commit to donations of a specific amount over the year. The project has been running a deficit to date and at the end of the meeting two cheques were presented, one a personal donation from John Paterson for \$60,000 dollars to AOTS for the Dondi Project. Harvey Douglas advised the Drumming group is making plans for another Western tour in May to promote the project; a tour of Newfoundland in June; and a Drum-a-thon with participants from all across Canada happening in October. Discussion took place on the progress of the project to date and Gary Ross was asked to be part of the Committee. NF& LA are planing to have presentations this year.

E10-01-04 The Dondi Project: continued

Congregations are not to be approached for funds, but Men's Groups and Men in those congregations can be asked to participate in the fund raising.

Contact Lloyd by email: "Lloyd Paul" <lloyd@united-church.ca>

E10-01-05 Web Site: Jim McKibbin commented on the work done on the web site by Mark Browning to date. He advised every one to review these changes and suggestions.

Got to: <http://www.aots.ca/pdf/AOTS-Websitelinks.pdf>

Devotions need to be submitted earlier so as to be available in timely way for some clubs

E10-01-06 Constitution - John Cooke has worked with Howard Wills in the review of the Constitution. He pointed out that it is actually a four-part document entitled the "Rules of Government of The National AOTS". The four parts are:

1. Constitution
2. Bylaws
3. Rules of Order
4. Standing Rules

There is also a 5th part, The Appendix" that was never approved as far as we know. It should be noted that the rules for changing the Constitution are more restrictive than the rules for changing the Bylaws.

Form a small group to review the Aims of the organization. Jim McKibbin agreed to take this as an action item. Lloyd Paul offered to be one of the group. Suggestions are received for information.

John has sent a document which is page 3 & 4 of the Minutes

Motion: Ross/Wills The report as presented and distributed as part of the minutes be approved
Carried

E10-01-07 National -Annual meeting 2010 Ken Lane is working on the Spring Roundup. Some information on the Annual meeting is now on the AOTS web site in the Fall/Winter Handshake. Harvey Douglas suggested that flights should be booked soon as some airlines have at seat sale at this time

E10-01-08 National -Biennial Convention April -2011

David Morris indicated he is continuing to work on arranging to have the Convention at the Spring Roundup as it was last time at Jackson Point Ont. in 2009. A program for the ladies would be needed.

E10-01-09 Gary Ross is concerned that the AOTS is not being represented at the Newfoundland/Labrador Conference

Recorded That: The National AOTS write a letter to the Newfoundland/Labrador Conference requesting/asking that the Conference make provision for a AOTS representation at Conf Exe. and East District and West District Exe. meetings. (The same for Men and that the Women are given)

Gary indicated he has concerns the **Individual members are not receiving** the items that were promised to them. He will work with an updated list from Wally MacDonald

President Jim closed the meeting in prayer. **The next National Council/Executive Conference Call meeting is scheduled for March 21, 2010**

**Report Submitted by Howard Wills and John Cooke to be attached to the Minutes
The National AOTS Council January 17, 2010 Constitution Report**

The following is an interim report of work that Howard Wills and John Cooke are doing to revise the AOTS Constitution. We are not asking for any approvals today; but we are interested in the Council members initial reactions, questions and comments.

The Constitution is actually a four-part document entitled the “Rules of Government of The National AOTS”. The four parts are:

1. Constitution
2. Bylaws
3. Rules of Order
4. Standing Rules

There is also a 5th part, The Appendix” that was never approved as far as we know. It should be noted that the rules for changing the Constitution are more restrictive than the rules for changing the Bylaws.

As a starting point, we suggest:

1. Delete the Standing Rules section, as it has not been used for many years.
2. Delete the Rules of Order section. We can simply state that all AOTS business meetings will be conducted according to the rules of order and debate as described in the United Church Manual. Frankly, this change would formalize what we have been doing for several years.
3. Combine the Constitution and Bylaws sections into one document to be known as “The Constitution”. This will likely be shorter and simpler than the current documents.

The existing Constitution and Bylaws speak to the membership and structure of The National AOTS, including the National Council, Executive, Conference/Presbytery Councils, and Clubs. There are some elements of the documents that obviously need to be updated, revised or deleted. We recommend the following changes of this nature:

1. Delete all references to Staff, the National Office and the Staff Committee.
2. National Secretary – restructure the responsibilities as previously proposed at National Council. (See summary actions below).
3. There is a provision for the Sub-Executive. If we clarify the membership and responsibilities of the Executive, then the Sub-Executive can be deleted.
4. Presbytery Councils – we suggest this section be deleted.
5. Conference Councils – we suggest this section be renamed “Regional Councils”. This would allow a Council to be formed on whatever geographic boundaries are appropriate and practical.
6. We suggest that the provisions to elect Conference Reps to National Conference in Conferences where there is no Conference Council be deleted.

There are several broader issues that we feel are important and may require more discussion at National Council or elsewhere.

1. The Aims of The National AOTS are clearly stated in the Constitution. Although we are not suggesting there is a need to change these statements now, this is an obvious time to consider these statements and update them if we want to do so. Recall that George Bishop created a new Vision statement a few years ago and it was generally accepted. We may want to incorporate some elements of that document in a new statement of Aims. We request that a separate group be formed to deal with this issue.
2. Leadership Structure
The Constitution provides for the National Council to be the administrative body of the National AOTS. The Council consists of 19+ members. Two Special Committees and six Standing

Committees are accountable to the National Council. The Constitution also provides for an Executive that has unclear membership and no specific duties except those directed by National Council. We realize there is a need to streamline the AOTS administration to meet today's realities while preserving our historical roots. We recommend that the leadership structure be redefined as outlined below:

- a. Establish the Executive as the administrative body of the AOTS with membership of ~10 (the Officers and a few others). This group would meet 3-4 times per year including an annual meeting.
- b. Retain the National Council as a consultative group that meets ~2 times per year.
- c. Redefine the accountabilities and responsibilities of committees to be in line with the new structure.

There are numerous implications of such changes, so we plan to bring a more detailed proposal to the next National Council meeting for discussion and input.

3. The role of women in AOTS has been debated numerous times over the last few years. At this time, we don't propose to make any changes regarding the role of women, unless there is clear direction from National Council.

Time Line for Change

We must adhere to the following provisions to implement a constitutional change:

1. A proposal must be developed and taken to the National Council. National Council must indicate "concurrence", "non-concurrence" or "no comment".
2. The final proposal must be circulated to members/clubs 4 months in advance of the National Convention.

Assuming we want to gain approval at the April 2011 Convention, we have until Dec 31, 2010 to debate and finalize the details. To support this, our goal is to present a comprehensive draft revision of the Rules of Government to the National Council in April 2010.

Historical Considerations

The proposals we are making today and in weeks to come are not intended to imply any disrespect to the original documents, those who created them, or to the National AOTS. In fact the existing Rules of Government have served the AOTS very well and we appreciate the good work that was done to create and amend the Rules of Government over the years. To that end, we would ask that a copy of the historical documents be placed in the archives for the historical record.

Summary of Actions

1. Continue the work to restructure the work previously carried out by the National Secretary. This needs to be completed by Sept 2010.
2. Form a small group to review the Aims of the organization. Jim McKibbin agreed to take this as an action item.
3. The Constitution Committee will propose a revised leadership structure at the next National Council Meeting.
4. The Constitution Committee is working to present a comprehensive draft revision of the Rules of Government to the National Council in April 2010.

We realize that these proposals are extensive and will likely raise many questions, comments and concerns. Feel free to contact John Cooke (519-869-2908) directly to discuss your issues off-line.

Respectfully submitted:

John Cooke
Howard Wills