

Final Bizarre Experience at the M2/W2 Office, March 31, 2014

The notice to membership of my concerns ([Executive Director's Official Last Message to membership](#), also on the website) was sent to members with e-mails March 30, 2014. On March 31, 2014, my final official day as Executive Director, I went to the office in part to send out notices to those members without e-mails. **Something I'm still reeling from happened there that speaks to the sad current sickness within M2/W2.**

After I arrived at the office, someone suddenly appeared at my inside office doorway. I told that person I would not talk. There began talking "at" me regardless about the recent mailing to membership. I heard immediately that I had no business being in the office. (I was still the Executive Director that day, finishing off a 16-year career as such.)

I put my head down and sat silently while the talking continued. (This was a deliberate non-violent tactic used widely. I actually started praying.) After some time, I asked that person to please leave. That person refused: not before I responded, I was told. I was eventually followed to the printer, still experiencing that talking. Finally, I hurriedly returned to my office and shut the door. That ended the talking.

The actions were annoyance at minimum. What was said over that time was not pleasant, though I tried to tune out.

Shortly afterwards, a Board member showed up in the office. I said, "Hi [and used the first name]." That person quipped, "Back at it, eh?" (I have no clear idea exactly what this meant, but it did not sound pleasant.) That person immediately went to consult with the other person behind a closed office door, then left. I was shortly afterwards informed by a Staff person that the police had been, or would be called. (One can conjecture how this action was authorized; how it was ethically justified...) I packed up my backpack and left. The two persons in this experience have close ties to the Abbotsford police. Given those "power over" odds against me, I thought it prudent that I leave. I did not need a (granted bizarrely unwarranted) "incident" with the police.

I returned moments later to pick up my wallet inadvertently left in my office. I found the front door locked! The person who had talked a long time "at" me was standing at the front door, but would not unlock it to let me in. (I had already handed in all my office keys.) I had to call through the door to our Office Coordinator that I had come to retrieve my wallet. Several Staff were standing within eye- and earshot. No one moved to open the door to let me in. I waited outside the M2/W2 front door for someone to bring me my wallet – in shocked disbelief.

The Office Coordinator eventually retrieved my wallet, then brought it not to the front door, but walked through the back door and down the hallway to the exit door onto the patio, and handed me my wallet.

It felt bizarre and surreal. I had just been physically barred from entering my own office after 40 years of service to the agency!

Thus ended my career of 26 years total on Staff with M2/W2, 40 years a volunteer, 6 years a Board member, etc., etc.:

- I had been informed that police action had been threatened against me. (For what?! The “crime” of informing the membership of debilitating agency dysfunction?)
- On my last day of work before retirement, I was not permitted to re-enter the office, though I was on that day still Executive Director.
- I have heard nothing to explain the behaviour of the first two encountered.
- The treatment felt utterly ignominious. Like I had just been “run out of Dodge City”; like I was a Black in the deep South suddenly ordered off the bus or out of the restaurant, or... Wow (I still say, reeling)!
- I had gone to the office also to say my final farewells. They were left unsaid.

Fellow M2/W2 Association members: No one at M2/W2 ever deserves the treatment I was subjected to on March 31, 2014: not any volunteer, not any Board member, not any prisoner/ex-prisoner, not any Staff, etc. This agency is profoundly sick for such an incident ever to have taken place. The agency needs profound healing before it can continue authentically in its longstanding ministry mandate. M2/W2 Association – Restorative Christian Ministries needs a mediator to work its conflicts through restoratively.

This experience is a dramatically eloquent contrary response to the Board’s call for an Extraordinary General Meeting, April 17, 2014. The “back at it” stated by the Board member is I know a broken record from me: **I call this agency to a full process of reconciliation to help us all heal.**

An Extraordinary General Meeting by every indication from past experience would be structured to perpetuate Board “power over” actions that have created agency dysfunction for years. Were I to attend the Extraordinary General Meeting as now structured, it would be *extraordinarily unsafe for me, as my workplace was since January 2014, as my own office became in bizarre escalation March 31, 2014.*

I ask: Can my experience in any way be construed as “restorative”, “Christian” or “just”?

I ask: How can the Board conclude there are “irreconcilable views” between Staff and Board when it has never sat down in the first place at the mediation table to discuss those different views? If that were to happen, then at minimum we could agree to disagree amiably, if disagreement persists.

I say: M2/W2 Association – Restorative Christian Ministries in my view is profoundly sick and dysfunctional. I appeal to the membership: rather than an “Extraordinary General Meeting”, hold the Board accountable to call for a full process of reconciliation.

I urge the Board to call mediator Alan Simpson, not an Extraordinary General Meeting. Mediator Alan Simpson wrote the following in the [Pre-Mediation Assessment Report](#), October/November 2012:

M2W2 board (including the executive director) has a dilemma that requires a collective effort to solve. The board cannot continue in the same patterns of dysfunction without

causing increasing damage to the whole agency. Yet, it appears that the board is not quite ready or able to work together in a problem solving environment for the good of the whole agency...

There is danger in seeking a quick fix for this current crisis due to financial restraints and the prolonged organizational dysfunction. When the board decides to move forward in a collaborative manner the following pathway might assist your agency...

Thanks.

Sincerely

Wayne Northey
Retired Executive Director