

April 3, 2014

Greetings Fellow Members:

In response to the Board's call for the Extraordinary General Meeting, I wish to recount the following story of my last day at the office before retirement, then make a few comments for your discernment. **I believe the experience recounted below made the case for an urgent full process of agency reconciliation.**

The notice to membership of my concerns 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 happened there that speaks to the sad current dysfunction within M2/W2.**

After I arrived at the office, someone suddenly appeared at my inside office doorway. I said that I would not talk with that person. 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 put my head down and sat silently while the talking continued. (This was a deliberate non-violent tactic used widely.) 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 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 office door for someone to bring me my wallet – in shocked disbelief.

A Staff member 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!

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

- Police action apparently threatened against me. (For what?! The “crime” of informing the membership of debilitating agency dysfunction?)
- Barred from re-entering the office, though I was on that day still Executive Director.
- No explanation given from anyone at the time or since.
- Ignominious treatment. 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 say, still reeling)!
- No chance to say farewells: 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 dished out at the M2/W2 office on March 31, 2014: not any volunteer, not any Board member, not any prisoner/ex-prisoner, not any Staff, etc. This indicates severe dysfunction for such an incident ever to have taken place. The agency needs deep 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 eloquently contradicts the Board’s call for an Extraordinary General Meeting, April 17, 2014. An Extraordinary General Meeting 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 became since January 2014; as my own office became in surreal escalation March 31, 2014.*

At minimum, a professional mediator, ideally Alan Simpson (whom I have recontacted), should be present to facilitate the meeting.

**I appeal to the membership:** rather than an “Extraordinary General Meeting”, hold the Board accountable to call for a full process of agency reconciliation.

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