

Merlin Affleck reply to BC friends

Hello Jeremy and Leonie,

Considering history is important when coming to conclusions about the elephant in the room. I was in neighbouring provinces for 34 years before coming here to BC six years ago. Yes BC has had the reputation of being a graveyard for sister workers for decades. I could give you a list of 16 names or more that have not made it in the last decade or so. Since coming here I did learn that some did not have the health to continue and that is understandable.

But several left wounded. I have had the opportunity now to personally visit with several of them and heard from them first hand about their experiences and I would encourage you to do the same. I would rather have you listen to those details first hand from these sisters themselves and I will be happy to supply you with their names and contact information if they agree. Most of them have been gracious (including auntie Betty) and silently suffered.

You also might want to visit with some who are more comfortable labouring in other provinces where they feel appreciated and safe. I can supply their contact information too if they agree and you can hear it first hand from them whether the pressure they felt here comes from the brother's side or the sister's or both.

Another good resource would be to visit with the convention owners. You have their contact information so you can speak with them and learn about their observations during preps.

You might check with one who came here from another province in recent times and health broke after 1.5 years. She returned home and heads up a field and does fine. These are gracious people who do not want to cause trouble but they may answer a 'yes or no' regarding where the uncomfortable spirit they felt came fromthe brothers or sisters or from both.

I would be able to supply you with the contact information for the mother of a young sister that came from another province and it would be good for you to hear it from her regarding the change that she witnessed in her dear daughter after coming here.

I wish you could have been in the car last week as could have been in the car last week as Judy, Connie and I traveled over the Coquihalla together and had a serious brotherly / sisterly visit. It was lovely. We were coming back from a meeting in Kelowna where concerned parents and elders met to discuss and ask direct questions about CSA and other issues like you have mentioned in this email. The meeting lasted from 7 - 11:30pm and a good spirit prevailed and I believe all would agree that it was productive and good points were agreed on for moving forward.

There is a place for face to face visits. We have an elders meeting scheduled for next week and we will be having more throughout the province in the near future too. I think you will remember how I spoke to the province via Zoom a few years ago opening up the subject of CSA. Since then I have worked with sisters and brothers regarding CSA courses and Workers code of conduct and Child safe policy documents. Recently I asked Cindy-Lynn to research and send out a 90 minute CSA course and other hotline information to our elders and parents.

All this has been a learning curve for me and I am not here to say that I have done everything right, but I can also say that I hate these issues along with you and pledge to be open to better ways moving forward. I also want to remind you about the old saying'there are many sides to a story' and I want to encourage you to do lots of first hand listening and learning from many sides about the history before coming to definite conclusions.

I've appreciated Nehemiah lately. The Kingdom was in disrepair. He observed, wept & prayed (including himself when the Kingdom suffered loss) while the enemy ridiculed. Then he inspired the people to unite and rebuild one stone at a time. They did and in 52 days the walls were rebuilt and strong again. The precious things of God (including children) could be safe again. Then they rejoicedand we can too!

Sincerely, Merlin