

August 28, 2014

The unfolding distortions of power, authority and obfuscation of factual information now seen at Mars Hill Church were identified by many going back to 2000. It was experienced by just a few then, since the church population was very small and not enough instances of deception, bald-faced lying and hiding salient information had been exposed to determine a pattern.

In subsequent years there were statements made by Mark Driscoll in which he was aware of his need to be restrained (accountable) to others locally. He would speak about structures implemented to maintain accountability. He would also complain. He feared the power those around him had to censure him and even dismiss him. He knew in those days restraint was real and he did not like it.

There were long stretches of time that Mark was hedged in.

Mark, however, maintained the power to frame the message and hide his behavior. His attitudes leaked constantly in his sermons. He isolated his victims from others. He held messaging jealously. As long as he could frame the communication, he could spin events, characterization of people, and his own actions to appear innocent through blame shifting.

The one being dismissed or characterized never had the same access to venues of communication. Mark held and kept the microphone.

Those of us who labored both behind the curtain and on the floor with congregants did see and experience Mark's behaviors and attitudes. Some of us spoke at various times to Mark about his behavior and language, but far too infrequently. We allowed an environment in which Mark could intimidate and insist on control of vision, and the means of building that vision. We allowed Mark to become progressively more outrageous and dysfunctional. When it was too much it was also too late to shift the inertia.

I for one, would ask for a meeting with Mark, knowing full well that I might enter his office like Nathan entering David's chamber to confront him about Bathsheba. Nathan feared for his life. Well, I didn't fear for my life, but I did for my livelihood.

When dismissed or fired, some believed fervently, as I did, that it was important to not complain in the public media. They sought instead opportunity to speak to peer authorities, who would address Mark's character failures. The silence that subsequently followed from Acts 29 or other networks was vacuous: they appeared to be totally impotent in exercising, if it had ever crossed their mind, 1 Corinthians 6. The result? Those harmed were silenced, lonely, and wounded, not trusting their own ability to discern perpetrators of abusiveness from those that are kind guides. Far too many have today no trust for church servants/authorities. Still countless others will not darken the door of an organized church for fear of what they already have come to know.

The attitudes and behaviors Mark Driscoll exhibits, as well as those of too many of his staff, trickle down to community group leaders and into every crevice of the church. Great numbers of people come out with new accounts revealing abuse of power. Cash flow is an important fuel for Mark's ambitions. The insistence, humiliating rants and threats associated with people's giving practices are unbiblical. For people of the Book to not understand the principle of not being under compulsion to give related to amount or destination is appalling. Does anyone there read Corinthians?

By 2007, proposed new bylaws were presented to the elders, who at the time had real power to stop what we have now witnessed. The elders at the time, surrendered to threats, intimidation, and manipulation that I and Paul Petry resisted coming from Mark Driscoll's office. Yes, threats, intimidation and manipulation happened to me. Some of the stories of members and former elders have now been disclosed for all to read. The chorus is large now and the patterns are clearer. The people who experienced Mark Driscoll's violence were alone in the past, but not now.

What made Paul Petry's and my dismissals different from others that happened afterwards? It happened to us both at the same time, in the same room, with the same people. We were witnesses together. Unbeknownst to either of us until much later, we each independently of the other wrote contemporaneous transcripts of the dialogue during that meeting – of the words spoken to us before they would evaporate from memory. Our quotations of the dialogue are almost verbatim. The others in the room were also witnesses. Some are now talking.

Our experience represents the testimony of two witnesses. Jamie Munson told me later that he and the other executive elders had learned a lesson: 1) never to fire two people at the same time, and, 2) the process of a trial would never happen again. Of course not, since the adopted new bylaws set in place, for the first time, “at will employment.”

The issue at the time related to the consequential nature of the proposed bylaw changes. The issues were technical, a little on the boring side at the time to read and think about. I remember some of the elders admitted not reading the proposal and wondering why I was making so much fuss. Two of them told me, “Just trust Mark.”

I diagrammed the reporting structure spelled out in the proposal and ran many scenarios to test them to see what ways abuses of power could happen. I discovered many. I talked about it, but I was not taken seriously. For my part, I had had enough experience with Mark Driscoll to identify his mode of operating. The proposed bylaws would implement an organization that gave Mark near absolute reign.

None of the other elders appeared to have understood Mark's feet of clay, except Paul Petry and me.

To me a major power grab was happening, which stripped away the last vestige of accountability and real balance of authority to restrain Mark Driscoll from self-destruction and the church with him. In my estimation, this was not healthy for Mark, or anyone else associated with Mark. The emerging dilution of brilliance Mark spoke of possessing, he had actually come to believing. Mark was sliding ever more, headlong into foundational character erosion. His existing belief in his entitlement, grandiosity, exploitiveness, demeaning nature and rageful vengeance, were already present and needed consistent restraining by those around him.

Mark would talk about “accountability,” but that was to geographically distant people like John Piper or C.J. Mahaney. To me that was less than credible, and not at all Biblical, since distance insulated Mark from being experienced in everyday life by those he would be accountable to. Mark again would have control of framing the message and blame shift without those distant knowing what was going on. Those close in proximity were marginalized. Those that saw and knew would have no voice. They would have no authority. They were under threat.

They came to know they could be fired, for any reason or no reason at all, with no venue of appeal or redress. They would no longer be Biblical peers (elders), but were employees, hirelings. All power would be possessed in as few as three men and ultimately in Mark Driscoll alone.

Now it is clear, finally, my voice can be heard. If I had released the following source documents seven years ago, I would be dismissed as a “bitter” former employee out for revenge. I have held on to these documents hoping those left behind in Mars Hill leadership left would wake up and confront Mark Driscoll and correct the misstep of agreeing with the reorganization without accountability or balance. I also hoped those at Acts29 would pressure Mark to restore authority balance. I hoped other alliances would do the same. None have, with the recent exception of Acts 29 which recently ousted him from their association. I despaired of those associations as they did not handle I Corinthians 6 well. In their hands it would not work, not because St. Paul was wrong, but because the evangelical church leadership too often operates unbiblically when it comes to inter-church discipline.

I have had to change my assessment, since the Acts 29 announcement of not only their removal of Mark Driscoll and Mars Hill Church from the network, but also their direct instruction to Mark that he seek professional (my word not theirs) help and surrender the microphone to someone else. This is an important move for the members of Mars Hill Church to recognize and insist on. To not take this seriously, exposes the likely reality that they are more enamored with their ears being tickled than really taking seriously the instructions regarding lying, abuse, intimidation, dereliction of fiduciary duty, hostility and slander directed toward fellow believers, freedom of people to associate and give via the dictates of their conscience, etc.

For everyone’s sake, Mark Driscoll needs to step away forever being in the post he now occupies. I say this because what ails Mark is very much like being addicted to opium or alcohol. Mark does not know how to handle communications honestly, simply because he cannot be honest with himself. Shame is too much for him to experience without employing minimization and denial. He cannot be in a position of power, since for him, it is an elixir to fuel his fantasies of grandiosity. He cannot be in a position which places him in authority, since his firm stance on entitlement will emerge again. In such an environment, everyone in his surroundings will be beneath him.

Having said the above as background, I am releasing these documents to give historic context to patterns of abuse of power wrought by Mark Driscoll and those closely associated with him. You can examine them and see the workings of these moments in time. What happens on stage in the public setting is entirely different from the intrigue behind the curtain. Hopefully, for the reader, these documents will open up the curtain a bit. It is, of course, from my perspective and dated. It also reveals as much of my shortcomings as anyone else’s. I stand with all the others, soiled, and culpable for not firmly hedging Mark in for his good and the good of all. I stand with the others as one timid, and putting financial wellbeing over confronting Mark on many occasions in elder meetings with witnesses.

The other reason for releasing these documents is that many Acts 29 startups adopted the bylaw and membership agreements wholesale as their own church governance documents. Both are profoundly flawed and do not follow a biblical pattern of leadership, authority, or freedoms to give generously without compulsion. They need to be examined and revised in line with biblical boundaries.

I have been confined by professional responsibilities and ethical restraints as a therapist to exercise caution related to my public communication, since I have had to consider the possibility that future clients might be current members or past members of MHC. In that context it is not ethically appropriate to influence or convolute my experience with theirs. Thus, publishing must consider the unintended consequence to clients who struggle with their conflict and their wellbeing, not mine.

The impingement has been very difficult in light of the continual refrain of abuse of power and control and the suffering of so many. I have consulted on the matter of disclosure as it relates to professional ethics and I have been told it is not unethical to tell my own story publically, or to advocate for the marginalized. Thus I am now releasing the following material as a historical set of documents which others may analyze and come to their own conclusions.

I have been approached by many in the media for my account, but have held to the notion that my communication needs to be penned by my hand, not someone else's. I have had too much reframing of my words and intentions to have it happen again for someone else's agenda. What I write, I am responsible for.

Let it be known, the existence of a binding non-disclosure agreement did not exist in 2007. There was no demand or threat of legal consequences if I publish correspondence between myself and others or publish internal documents. Further note that Mark Driscoll said, in the presence of a witness, that he put no restraint on me publishing documents (see the transcript at the end of this set of documents, pg 107). The restraint has been mine and in consideration for my profession and clients and keeping the resolution of these matters within the Christian community.

I have given this set of documents to Paul Petry to publish via "Joyful Exiles." It makes sense to have my set of documents with Paul's, since together a fuller picture can be discerned.

I have been advised that there are many typos, punctuation errors and sentence constructions that are wrong or hard to understand. As embarrassing as it is to leave them as they are, in my mind it is not important, since to changing them for my comfort would be to change history to avoid personal shame and embarrassment. With few exceptions, the documents are as they were.

I have obscured one elder's email content from the documents. He sent email with a non-disclosure paragraph at the end of each. I will honor this. I have, however, provided the sense of the content in my own words. I have also obscured some salary information, since it has little import to the controversy the documents reveal.

Speaking of embarrassment, I regret one document that I wrote to gain a transfer of membership in good standing from Mars Hill (see page 101). Experience as a pastoral counselor provided a shift and discovery of what God has likely equipped me for over the course of my life to date. The experience introduced me to being a licensed therapist in the larger community, for which I am grateful.

But I regret the casting of the letter I wrote for two reasons:

1. I wanted to leave MHC without complications, so I made statements that subsequently fed into what I came to know would be spun to obscure the real issues.

2. I did not want any more attacks on my character, which happened anyway.

I betrayed Paul and Jonna Petry, since their brutal, unjust excommunication was not resolved and was further obscured by my framing of the letter. The statements I made appeared to endorse the practices embedded in MHC, which would envelope the actions taken to scapegoat the Petrys as justifiable. This was done for my personal gain without regard for Paul and his family. It was plain wrong! Paul and I have long since resolved this and are good friends today.

Bent Meyer  
Seattle, Washington

***READ ONLY***  
***Do Not Copy Any Documents Contained  
In this Set***

**Source Documents Not Organized for Review Until**

3/12/2008

Table of Contents	
2014 Introduction.....	1
2008 Introduction to the collection.....	5
Context Narrative	9
EXECUTIVE TEAM   TUESDAY, June 19th 2007, 9:00AM-11:00PM.....	11
Executive Team Communication.....	12
9/5/2007 Bylaw communication – Bent to Jamie Munson.....	19
Meetings of members and committees of members.....	31
Munson response to first Bylaw communication from Bent Meyer.....	32
2007 Bylaws Revision – Summary of Changes 9/05/07.....	341
EXECUTIVE TEAM   TUESDAY, September 11th 2007.....	363
9/11/2006 communicate from Bill Clem related to first Bylaw concerns.....	396
Account of Scott Thomas meeting with Paul Petry and Bent Meyer in the park.....	407
Scenario bylaw testing.....	418
Bill Clem’s response to scenario testing.....	441
Mike Wilkerson response to scenario testing.....	452
Mike Wilkerson follow-up response to scenario testing.....	463
Second Draft of Bylaw proposal.....	474
Email to Bill Clem related to the second Bylaw revision.....	496
Termination meeting notice.....	58
Munson employment letter to Bent Meyer.....	57
Munson employment Termination of Employment notice to congregation.....	58
Elder qualification investigation of Bent Meyer memo.....	63
Telephone conversation and follow up email with Lief Moi.....	66
Open disclosure of my conduct and correspondence from Behr Meyer to Elders.....	65

Material presented at Bent Meyer's investigation meeting, Bent's reply to Scott Thomas .....	66
Scott Thomas response .....	719
Material presented at Bent Meyer's investigation meeting , Bent's replay to Elders .....	71
Scott Thomas response .....	74
Chapter relates to events that followed my trial before the elders.....	76
Bent Meyer's response.....	80
Steve Tompkins contact attempt.....	80
Resignation letter from Pastor Bent Meyer .....	82
Annotated response to excerpts from the 142 page document .....	83
Dave Kraft Question .....	94
Bent's reply to Dave Kraft .....	95
Correcting exaggerated communication. ....	99
Last summary communication to Mark and the Elders related to the events that transpired .....	102
Notice from Jame Munson related to taking down the members communication .....	103
Follow up communication to Jamie Munson related to taking down communication related to Paul Petry .....	106
Summary of meeting with Mark Driscoll 2/14/2008.....	108

**Introduction (The following statement was written 3/12/2008 from the view that an internal solution was still possible).**

The following documents represent correspondence between the elders of Mars Hill Church and me dating back to 2006.

The reason for making them available to be viewed now is to provide source material for members to view the inner workings of Mars Hill Church governance. It is a view that is fundamentally hidden from members and attendees of the church.

Many will ask why I am doing this. Is it that I am looking for vindication, revenge, or an effort to get even? All of those at various times have crossed my mind, but have also been confessed, confronted, questioned, and carefully thought through with others, to proceed in a fashion that is not for self serving purposes, but rather to bring about a view of the events experienced by all concerned at Mars Hill Church.

I have no responsibility or voice related to the governance of Mars Hill Church going into the future. I only have a testimony of what I experienced, wrote and the writing of others as they relate to me and you, the members of Mars Hill Church in this process.

As you read the contents you will find moments in which you will discover language, thinking or possibly behavior I will need to be confronted on. If there is it is a blind spot in me, I invite you to challenge me.

You will also discover areas of concern related to other players in the events represented here. You will have to determine if you want to confront them and if you do, whether they are open and transparent with you. You as members have no legal rights in the area of governance of the church, but you do have scriptural authority and influence. You will have to choose if, how, when, and with whom you exercise this influence.

Some have asked why I have not released evidence that would defend my interests. My answer is that my interests are of no concern; truth telling is. The other reason is that this is a family matter, meaning the manner of living, sin, confrontation, repentance, reconciliation and restoration are matters that need to be adjudicated inside the boundaries of the Christian community. Paul criticizes the Corinthians for seeking litigation in the civil arena, not necessarily because it is an incapable, or an unfair agency, but because there should be wise adjudicators in the church to fairly and thoroughly judge matters related to disputes within that community. I have operated over the last 5 months hoping wise, impartial, and uncompromised men would stand up and act. This has not happened. It is with sorrow that I see men I regarded as upright, bury their heads so they would not have to see and be forced into action. You will see that much email conversation has ensued over the last five months, because I believed integrity must exist in the elder community for it to exist anywhere.

It is still my position to keep the matter in the church community. I was greatly concerned when written and verbally shared material was presented to the secular media. In my mind this was the wrong audience, so I have held tight to the material you are about to examine. The person entrusted with what you are holding has promised to allow others to examine it, but not copy. This is simply to prevent indiscriminate distribution, which assuredly would get it into the hands of the secular press. **Therefore, I want you to pledge, that you will not be an avenue of distribution.** It is alright to discuss what you learn with other Christians and to encourage them to examine the material for themselves. **However, I want you to be careful that you do not enter into gossip. Therefore, I Counsel you in conversation with others to say, "Bent reports..." or "I read the source document which said..." Reporting firsthand information**



**is not gossip. Each of the other authors of what you will read is responsible for their words.**

Those of you who have been at Mars Hill Church for at least a year or two, will know the Church policy of confidentiality is "there is no confidentiality" when it come to discipline. That language is intended to be understood that those in authority are not bound by confidentiality. It is however a blanket statement in the frame of discipline. Thus those of you, who will object to church governance documents being viewed by members, step into the frame. You have responsibility to provide accountability, which means examining the elders' minutes and asking questions of the elders when you don't understand something or see things that trouble you. When answers given are not adequate or you sense you are being misled, it is your responsibility to insist on full disclosure, not summaries or crafted language that reveals little. I would recommend you insist on seeing detailed elders minutes, not bullet points. Narrative discloses the heart and soul of a meeting. It gives you a real sense of the issues and struggle, if there is any struggle. You should also have full access to detailed financial statements not summaries that obscure. Select an audit committee of financial people (members in the body, independent from the elders) who will examine the books and give an independent assessment to the rest of the body. There is a professional auditor who reviews the churches account annually, but his concern is that spending is legally reported. He has little concern about priorities or imbalances or allocations. You do, since it is your money.

You will discover dialogue about slander, and libelous language. I have steered clear of this. I implore you to do the same. Keep to the facts, ask questions related to the facts, and pay attention to the timeline.

The timelines is important. The events unfolded sequentially. Claims of knowledge and justification for actions taken before such knowledge was available must be judged irrelevant. The Executive Elders were responding to the writing and verbal communications close to the time the documents were authored. I was, for instance, responding to events and conversations that preceded the documents I wrote, not to things which followed. It seems obvious, but I have been in direct communications with an executive elder who justified past action with claims admitted to be discovered months later.

I have made particular note of charges against me that proved after investigation and trial to have been found "not credible." Yet, later documents and conversation by executive elders ignore this important finding to accuse me of much more than what I was found to be guilty of, "an unhealthy mistrust of senior leadership." The final document in the set related to a meeting I had with Mark, in which he was confronted with the very issue of the charges he authored being found not credible. He insisted all were credible and he would not back down. You will see an increasing level of mistrust based on actions taken, language used, and obfuscations employed to divert attention from the central issues; explanations piled up to explain explanations rather than just admitting the truth.

The above guidelines will become vital if you choose to pursue the elders, since they will compress and justify their actions based on knowledge not available at the time of their actions.

You will also find that most elders to this day do not know the entire case against me or Paul or Mike Wilkerson for that matter, since it is kept from them because it is an employee action, which the executive elders can execute without review, accountability or justification to anyone but themselves.

This brings me to why I am doing any of this. I am a witness to a systemic evil within Mars Hill Church. It is an evil that will be seen again, because the source of the evil resides in the incomplete character development of certain men. Now, what I have just said will be judged by

many as an unfounded accusation. Yet, I don't retreat from it. You will have to be detectives. Yes, I am asking you to take the role of being the wise men and women Paul was speaking about in the Corinthian church community. Weigh the evidence and determine for yourself. I stood with these men and you will have to judge. However, if you embark on this investigation, you will need to act, otherwise you are a voyeur.

How should you act? I cannot tell you. I am not a player with a direct voice to change anything. I am a witness, to warn, and provide a heads-up to others who will have interaction with the Executive Elders, Board of Directors and Elders with no inherent authority except what is given them by those higher up. I am a witness to hold up a warning sign to at least be aware of possible danger ahead.

Lastly, I have been advised to provide a few notes to explain what precipitated me writing what I did. To make it clear what are contemporary notes and not part of the original I will use ***bold italicized characters***. You will also note that some documents have margin notes. They are contemporary to the document not the original.

## Documents leading up to the proposed Bylaw proposal

*All Annotations that are not contemporary to the original writing of the documents or associated in close proximity are displayed in bold italic. They are added to fill in data not represent in the documents themselves.*

*The following documents represent events and decision taken by the Executive team while they were accountable to all the elders. This period was under the jurisdiction of the previous bylaw jurisdiction.*

## Context Narrative

*In May of 2007, the previous elected Executive Teams nominated and voted in by the entire council of elders were told to resign. They did. When I was informed I was shocked. I had confidence in them, because I believed they represented the rest of the elders. They were accountable to all the elders. Resignation without consulting the rest of the elders was in my mind and betrayal of their representative charge and advise-n-consent.*

*When all the elders were confronted with the question of how this happened. I look over at Mark Driscoll and asked him if he had engineer this, so we (the elders) would be forced to vote in new candidate specifically selected by the then executives comprised of Mark and Jamie Munson.*

*His reply was "Yes."*

*This is one of the actions that unfolded that demonstrated the "unilateral decree tactic" without greater elder discussion or consent Mark would increasingly employ with impunity.*

*During this meeting Mike Wilkerson, who had been one of the elected executive team members, was unclear that he had resigned. He was under the impression it was under consideration. So, he voiced that understanding and confusion.*

*It annoyed Mark. He called for anyone of the other elders to volunteer to be on a new Executive Team. No one did apparently for fear. Paul Petry stood up and tried to nominate me to be part of the team. I declined, since it was outside what, I rationalize; God had called me to do at Mars Hill Church. In reality, I was fearful. Also the hours required would cut into what I could make available for people, and I didn't want to do more administrative work. I was certainly not looking for power or authority beyond what I had inherently in being an elder.*

*The following executive team minutes reflect the already assumed self governance these men took upon themselves. The elders were being marginalized in practice. And, foremost, the existing bylaws were not being followed.*

*I was particularly concerned by the sanitizing of elder discussions to bullet points only in future meeting minutes. I saw no reason to obscure deliberation language from the minutes, since these men were accountable to the elders and interested members, yet that is what they determined to do. The minutes were reduced to bullet points, which did not represent process, deliberation, debate or compromise.*

*You will see a statement related to risk management. This is important to consider it provides clues to how the governing board would conduct itself. It also exposes how future cover for wrong doing would be obscured.*

*It was also during this time period that Mike Wilkerson voice a specific concern related to Mark Driscoll's character, which resulted in him being disciplined and having his salary docked. This was another infraction of the bylaws, since this action could not be executed without elder knowledge, review and consent. It was done impulsively and unilaterally. This telegraphed increasing unilateral behavior from Mark.*

*I and other elders were outraged by the action, since the event happened during an elders meeting and should have been discussed and adjudicated by all the elders. Instead, Mark and Jamie Munson said it was an employee action, meaning it was outside the jurisdiction of the elders. This was a clear overstepping of the bylaw boundaries. This did not sit well with the elders and became a major topic of complaint at the Elders Whistler Retreat. As far as I was concerned all matters of church governance was elder business, Mark and Jamie had determined it was theirs exclusively right.*

*I was prepared to pull the nuclear clause in the then bylaw rules, which permitted any elder to call an all elders meeting to address an action or decision executed by any other elders for review and possible overturn.*

*I met with Scott Thomas and AJ Hamilton. Scott admitted he was not party to what lead up to Mike's discipline, while defend Marks authority and right in doing so. Scott was likely not familiar with the boundaries of the bylaws. AJ told me 4 people had Counceled Mike not to bring the matter up before the elders. This was new information and made me pause and relent from calling the elders together.*

*I had occasion to talk to Mike later, at which time I mention AJ's statement to him. He was visibly shaken and told me he had only talked to one person about the matter and that person had not Counceled him either way. I don't believe AJ intentionally lied, but I do believe whoever gave him that information was fabricating a false story.*

*I spoke to Jamie Munson directly to appeal to him that an explanation to the elders was paramount. They needed to know what the justification for the action was.*

*Jamie persuaded Mark to explain, however, Mark did it in a completely inappropriate way. He stood before the elders, pulled out a hand written note of charges against Mike and ended by say "this is the end of the matter, there will be no further discussion."The question ran immediately through my head, who is accountable to whom? Yet, knowing full well that if I challenged that pronouncement I would be out of a job. It was more than intimidation, it was a certainty. I talked to Mike later to understand how he was responding to what he experienced. He was speechless. He had prepared a statement of his own, but wasn't permitted to present it.*

*These and a few other events accumulated to cause me to view the proposed bylaw changes as a bald-faced attempt to codify conduct and attitudes that were already being exercised by Mark and experienced by the elders. Accountability in my view was virtually non-existent in the language being proposed.*

**EXECUTIVE TEAM | TUESDAY, June 19th 2007, 9:00AM-11:00PM at the Wedgwood Campus**

**Elders Present: Jamie Munson, Mark Driscoll, Bubba Jennings, Scott Thomas**

Deacons Present: Chad Toulouse

Volunteers Present: Tim Beltz

**Meeting Minutes**

The inaugural meeting of the newly formed Mars Hill Church Executive Team was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Pastor Jamie Munson.

**Old Business**

None.

**New Business**

**Corporate Officers**

**Discussion ensued regarding the appointing of corporate officers.** A motion was proposed, seconded and approved unanimously to appoint the following corporate officers of Mars Hill Church:

- **President: Jamie Munson**
- **Vice President: Mark Driscoll**
- **Secretary: Scott Thomas**
- **Treasurer: Bubba Jennings**

**Staffing and Salaries**

A complete revamp of our staff compensation policies was commissioned by the Executive Elders. A proposal will be forthcoming for review. Upon adoption of said changes all staff and elders salaries will be reviewed.

The following raises were approved, effective July 1, 2007

- o Jeff VanderGiessen – current salary [REDACTED] – new salary [REDACTED] per year
- o Kyle Firstenberg – current salary [REDACTED] – new salary [REDACTED] per year

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

To: Mars Hill Elders

From: Pastor Jamie Munson, Lead Pastor

**Subject: Executive Team Communication**

Date: July 19, 2007

**Big Picture**

There is a shared sense of encouragement and excitement by the executive team. There is a lot of work to be done but the team feels good about the general direction and ability to architect what is going to be best for the whole church in this next season.

Bent Meyer 6/18/14 5:40 PM  
**Comment:** Notice those that are excited number 4 people.

A major initiative of the Executive Elder Team is going to involve prioritizing the work and projects at hand and making sure we are delegating as many decisions as possible to the other teams who in many cases will have the better vantage point for making those decisions. Over the summer the executive elders will be developing a Dashboard that will help us to monitor overall church health. This will be an important tool for understanding in a snapshot how the church is doing.

**Executive Elder Administration**

Due to summer vacations and scheduling, the executive elders have planned for two meetings in July (10<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>) and will be evaluating a more frequent meeting schedule towards the end of the summer. In order to comply with our bylaws the executive elders have appointed corporate officers for the organization. Further discussion and planning is necessary to effectively articulate and document the specific roles and responsibilities of each executive elder. This planning will happen over the next few months. The corporate officers are:

- President: Jamie Munson
- Vice President: Mark Driscoll
- Secretary: Scott Thomas
- Treasurer: Bubba Jennings

The executive elders are reviewing the most effective way to handle the communication from the executive elders meetings in order to meet both our required legal reporting as well as our desire to keep the rest of the elders and staff informed as to what work is progressing. We have come up with the following principles.

Bent Meyer 6/18/14 5:42 PM  
**Comment:** This would come to be understood as the minimum requirements to still be legal.

- There is a need for a more narrative communication which will serve the purpose of informing the elders regarding the current work of the executive team
- There is a need for a shorter more sanitized document to serve as the legal minutes of the meeting which will be printed and filed.

- It is important to note when discussion occurred around certain decisions, but not necessarily document the entire discussion but rather communicate the salient points.
- A template for both the narrative communication and the legal minutes will be developed
- Research needs to be done regarding how to handle the minutes for Risk Management purposes
- Communication to the campus pastors will be absolutely vital in order to bring them in on the planning and decision making in order to effectively communicate with their respective campus teams
- In order to cut down on email and forwarded documents an elders only web system needs to be developed to serve as a hub for elder communication

## Staffing and Salaries

An area of major need is to develop a more formal staff and elder compensation process. This work has been commissioned to Tim Beltz who will be putting together a proposal for how to handle compensation and benefits for the entire staff. A team of non-paid elders will need to review the proposal along with our attorney and cpa to ensure it is fair, reasonable and legal. Tim Beltz will be seeking out the current non-paid elders (Tim Reber, Tim Quiring and James Dahlman) to review his draft upon completion. The goal is to have a new policy in place and implemented by the end of July so that raises and new staff hires can be approved. Tim will also be doing research on what it would require to ordain executive level deacons, which is very common among other churches. As well, the majority of the staffing decisions will be given to the campus pastors as they discern the needs of their campuses and are given more freedom to make hiring/firing decisions. This policy and framework will give everyone a more objective criteria for evaluating staffing needs and compensation and free up any conflict of interest issues we may have.

Due to the reorganization and major job transition for a few key deacons the executive elders have approved immediate raises for the following Deacons.

- Jeff VanderGiessen – raise from 52K to 74K effective July 1, 2007
- Kyle Firstenberg – raise from 40K to 74K effective July 1, 2007

Both Jeff and Kyle are carrying a significant load for the church and have worked hard and been underpaid for some time now. They are good men and have been well tested and approved.

Discuss Salary Team

There has been a lack of clarity regarding performance reviews for Pastor Mark and Pastor Jamie. A formal process is being developed for their future annual reviews with a temporary system being put in place for this years review. Mark and Jamie have conducted self assessments, received feedback from their MCI coaches and have had 360 degree feedback conducted on each of them. These documents will be reviewed by Tim Beltz who will complete a formal assessment to be shared with the other members of the executive team. Going forward a pre-determined process will be put in place for their reviews and will be based on their goals for next year compared against actual performance, 360 degree feedback and a formal review team.



## Campus Planning

West Seattle – Pastor Adam and Pastor Bubba will be working out the details for the transition in West Seattle. The public announcement will come this Sunday the 24<sup>th</sup> regarding Bubba's transition and the following Sunday, July 1<sup>st</sup> Adam and his family will be introduced and a reception held after the service for the body to meet Adam, Jen and Carter. Bubba will be around to support Adam and the congregation through this transition in an effort to minimize the questions and concerns from the body.

Shoreline – Nothing new to report other than Pastor Steve will be building his campus team over the summer and continuing his search for a permanent facility.

Ballard – Pastor Bubba has begun meeting with the Ballard team. There is a lot of work to do in Ballard and the team is just beginning to form and assess the needs and priorities. The only significant capital project underway is reconfiguring the West Mezzanine to accommodate a larger production room and server room for the transition to Satellite technology as well as a more robust camera and switching setup to enable the best possible capture and delivery of the sermon to other campuses. The executive elders have approved a \$1 million dollar bank line of credit in order to proceed with the necessary technology projects in Ballard. These funds will be drawn on as needed for the purchase and installation of the necessary technology to enable the move towards satellite distribution. All specific draws on the funds will be approved by Pastor Bubba and Pastor Jamie. As the executive team forms a church wide capital budget for the next year these purchases may be kept on the line of credit or rolled into a broader capital campaign. We need to move on these projects now in order to be ready for the fall but need to wait until the entire plan for expansion in the next year is complete before raising funds from the body.

Wedgwood – Pastor James is beginning to sketch together a plan for the launch of a Wedgwood campus.

Downtown – The prospects of a campus downtown are under consideration and are contingent upon Tim Gaydos finishing the elder process and a location being secured.

Eastside – The eastside is being considered as a campus with Jesse Winkler being the campus pastor. The specifics of this are not clear yet as the key variable is finding the right location. More details will be communicated as they come together.

While there are various leads and opportunities for other locations, there are no other campuses being formally considered at this time.

## Communication Plan

**It is important that all of the Elders and Deacons are aware, supportive and following the same communication plan as these messages roll out to the church. Here are the communication channels and corresponding timeline for this message. We also need to keep the specifics of the Eastside Campus amongst the staff until Pastor Jesse Winkler has an opportunity to inform his congregation.**

- **All Staff Meeting and Discussion – Wednesday June 20<sup>th</sup>**

- **Pulpit – Sunday June 24<sup>th</sup>**
  - o Pastor Mark will be working out of Nehemiah chapter 10 and speaking of the covenants of the people and relating that to our church and what we need the body to be praying for and serving for. He will also be preaching live at every service in both West Seattle and Ballard with a shorter sermon and introducing Bubba at each service giving him 10-15 minutes to share his vision with the congregation.
- **All Members Announcement – Friday June 22nd**
  - o On Friday a document similar to the staff document will be emailed out to the members and posted on the members site.
- **Pulpit – Sunday July 1<sup>st</sup>**
  - o Pastor Mark will be working out of Nehemiah chapter 11 and speaking about the leaders of the church. We will take this time to publicly announce and introduce additional changes in the leadership. In West Seattle this will include introducing Adam Sinnett and his family and holding a reception after the service for him to meet and greet the congregation there.
- **Web and Email – Monday July 2<sup>nd</sup>**
  - o Following the announcement of the changes to everyone on Sunday, follow up pieces will be posted on the pastors prayer blog, the loop email and the main public website.
- **Answering Questions –**
  - o You will all undoubtedly be asked many questions, please answer honestly what you can and those you are unable to answer can be directed to the appropriate elder. There is nothing to hide in these changes and we are sincerely and soberly excited about what is in store for Mars Hill Church.

#### **Future Work for the exec team**

These items were discussed briefly and noted for future executive elder consideration

- Formation of the Advisory Council
- Re-write of the bylaws
- Approval of the staff hiring plan, next fiscal years budget and office space plan
- Building a formal accountability process

*This chapter contains documents related to my concerns related to the Bylaw proposal.*

## 9/5/2007 Bylaw communication – Bent to Jamie Munson

*The comments represented here assumed modifications would be made to the bylaws at the time of presentation. It was beyond comprehension how great the shift would be. Yet, as you will see, I am voicing clear intention to have open debate over future language. I also wanted to make sure all the elders understood the consequence of all we would be changing and adopting. As events unfolded, some elders didn't read the proposed bylaws carefully, others didn't understand what they were voting on. A few did not even read the document at all.*

**From:** Pastor Bent Meyer  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 05, 2007 4:13 PM  
**To:** Pastor Jamie Munson  
**Cc:** Pastor Bill Clem  
**Subject:** Mars Hill Church - Bylaws - Final - 2-11-06.doc

I have made comments to the only copy of the Bylaws I have. If yours is substantially different, please send me the official one. You will notice I have included Bill in this communication, since I have been instructed that Bill would be my attitude check. I have chosen not to let Mike know my thoughts, though he is my supervisor, since I am responsibly for them and his situation warrants him being outside potential controversy.

I am very concerned about eroding any more authority from the Council of Elders. I will speak to this in more detail during the upcoming elders meeting.

I am also concerned that the more complicated the organized become, the more authoritarian in style and content communication becomes i.e. the Communications Directive. This creates silent contention. None of the elder entertain contention in my hearing. In fact, every effort is make to be objective.

You know through the Whistler feedback, that I am very concerned about the way (the process) Mike was disciplined. I have voiced my concern, been given assurance that I would not have to pull the trigger on Article VII, Section A, giving any elder the right to voice an objection and it be brought before the elders for a potential vote to override the decision, because it would be reconsidered. I have heard nothing. No official communication has been forthcoming, unless it's in one of the EE elder's minute and I have missed it. The bylaws state there to be a 30 day window for exercising that right. It is not clear whether it is from the time of the decision or the communication of the decision. It is from the time of communication, the window is still open. If something needs to clarity it is this issue. The elders must receive disclosure of all matter related to the misconduct of elders of the church to govern. Scott, and AJ informed me (anecdotal) there was more to the issue than what appeared on the surface, yet we are not informed officially. A significant part of the matter took place in our presence. It's still not clear to me if this falls under the council of elder's jurisdiction or the exec elders or lead elder, since we don't know the facts. This event and some others has eroded trust and put a heavy handed spin on the whole bylaw issue.

This Bylaw move has been communicated to be major shifts in authority, responsibility and voting rights, ramifications unacceptable to me. I will speak to that at the elders meeting.

Whatever is presented must be deliberated over time. I will want to consult with other elders separately and in small groups, and as a whole. I want to be sure all of us understand clearly what we are agreeing to and the consequence. To date, almost no discussion has been conducted in my hearing related to this matter; however, once the proposal is on the table, it is open season. The current bylaws mandate 30 day notice, appropriated documentation and deliberation before a vote. The bylaws also mandate detailed notes, which I take to be literal and full.

To date, governance has been structure on the assumption that Mark would outlive us all, yet the reality is that he will not outlive the organization. In fact, he made it clear that under the right pressure or discouragement he would bale, which means the bylaw have to consider what would happen if the next lead pastor, had different doctrinal leanings and a different mission. To say, proper vetting would sort that out, is not sufficient. People change over time and the man would be following a dynamic promoter. This alone would put huge pressure on him to do what is necessary to draw crowds. The financial shock created by people leaving because Mark no longer preaches will drive MHC in directions that are potentially not wise or good. To say that is unlikely ignores the possibility that a bus or car has Marks name on the grill.

The last issue. I have been asked if I trust the exec elders or not. I can say I trust men are sinners, bottom line. I trust men are self deceiving. Therefore, there must be accountability to many not a few. There must be openness, which I see little. Now, do I think the men currently on that team are upright to the best of my knowledge, the answer would be yes, but, I've been fooled before. I know full well from the self-disclosure of some of our elders, that there are constant struggles many of which could disqualify if not managed well. They are repentant and managing, but we are all on a journey on skateboards trying to avoid the next rut. Kings, prophets and priests all get slammed in the OT. The percentage of corrupt to righteous is staggering. The bylaws provide some protection from an errant person or persons.

As I reread my comments on the bylaws and in this email, there is a harshness that comes across, thanks to email, you need to filter it out. None of what I am saying is off mission or an attempt to lose sight of the objectives we all want to see fulfilled. I have been on the multi-site bandwagon before the Paradox, with multiple trained effective and respected pullpeteers (I don't know if I'm make up a word or not). I think that vision is finally coming to be. I was slammed hard for suggesting multiple pulpit preachers, probably before you were an elder, but I haven't lost the vision for that to safeguard the mission and efforts of MHC beyond Mark.

Respectfully,  
Pastor Bent

## By-Laws of Mars Hill Fellowship

### A Nonprofit Corporation Without Members

#### Article I The Government

SECTION A – The senior leadership of Mars Hill Fellowship, also known as Mars Hill Church, shall be vested in a governing board of male elders/pastors, hereinafter referred to as the Council of Elders or the Eldership, which is composed of both paid and unpaid elders/pastors who follow the leading of Jesus who is the Senior Pastor of Mars Hill (1 Peter 5:1–4). To be considered as an elder, a man must have been called by God into leadership at Mars Hill (Acts 20:28) and be a man of the highest Christian character according to the qualifications of Scripture (1 Timothy 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9). The Council of Elders shall be the Board of Directors for purposes of the Washington Nonprofit Corporation Act.

- Relation to God

Mars Hill Church 3/13/08 8:24 AM

**Comment:** This is the only copy of the By-Laws I have. If this appreciably different from yours, please send me an official version.

This constitution is sufficient for the operation of the Church now and going forward, with a few amendments.

I have heard and understand the increasing communication difficulty and governance complexity expansion creates. Yet, those issue can be handles with representatives who are elected by campus elders to speak and vote on campus pastor's behalf. Or it can be handled via tel-conferencing. See RCM qualifications at the end of this document.

The challenge is not in representation, but rather in the informal and closely control committee decision making process currently exercised. The by-laws specify communication of all meeting must be exercised faithfully, to make this work or any other system.

Decision will slow, but that is the nature of complexity.

Mars Hill Church 3/13/08 8:24 AM

**Comment:** Do you have a copy of the articles of incorporation? Our by-laws need to conform. RCW 24.03.035 ,(12) To make and alter bylaws, not inconsistent with its articles of incorporation or with the laws of this state, for the administration and regulation of the affairs of the corporation.

Mars Hill Church 3/13/08 8:24 AM

**Comment:** There has been speculative conversation, that there would be a move away from the council of elders being something other than the governing board of MHC. I will oppose any move to change this.

As long as MHC is one church, all the elders are responsible for it in its entirety.

- A man – masculine leader
- Above reproach – without any character defect
- Able to teach – effective Bible communicator
- Not a new convert – mature Christian
- Relation to Family
  - Husband of one wife – one-woman man, sexually pure
  - Has obedient children – successful father
  - Manages family well – provides for, leads, organizes, loves
- Relation to Self
  - Temperate – mentally and emotionally stable
  - Self-controlled – disciplined life of sound decision-making
  - Not given to drunkenness – without addictions
  - Not a lover of money – financially content and upright, not greedy
- Relation to Others
  - Respectable – worth following and imitating
  - Hospitable – welcomes strangers, especially non-Christians for evangelism
  - Not violent – even-tempered
  - Gentle – kind, gracious, loving
  - Not contentious – peaceable, not quarrelsome/divisive
  - Good reputation with outsiders – respected by non-Christians
  - Mutually submissive to the other elders

Additionally, he must competently and consistently accomplish the biblical duties of an elder/pastor which include:

- Prayer and Scripture study (Acts 6:4)
- Ruling/leading the church (1 Timothy 5:17)
- Managing the church (1 Timothy 3:4–5)
- Caring for people in the church (1 Peter 5:2–5)
- Giving account to God for the church (Hebrews 13:17)
- Living exemplary lives (Hebrews 13:7)
- Rightly using the authority God has given them (Acts 20:28)
- Teaching the Bible correctly (Ephesians 4:11; 1 Timothy 3:2)
- Preaching (1 Timothy 5:17)
- Praying for the sick (James 5:13–15)
- Teaching sound doctrine and refuting false teachings (Titus 1:9)
- Working hard (1 Thessalonians 5:12)
- Rightly using money and power (1 Peter 5:1–3)
- Protecting the church from false teachers (Acts 20:17–31)

- Disciplining unrepentant Christians (Matthew 18:15–17)

SECTION B – The Council of Elders determines the lead elder, who functions as the first among equals and is the lead pastor for the church. It is the duty of the lead elder to help lead the Council of Elders and the rest of the church in effectively obeying God's leading as revealed in Scripture.

Mars Hill Church 3/13/08 8:24 AM

**Comment:** This must not change. The lead elder must always be accountable to the all the elders, not just a few.

SECTION C – Selection as an elder pursuant to Article II below confers the authority to preach, administer the ordinances prescribed in Article IX below, marry, and enjoy all the rights and privileges accorded to licensed or ordained ministers under secular law.

SECTION D – No loan shall be made from the church to any director. Any director who assents to the making of such a loan shall be jointly and severally liable for its repayment.

## Article II

### The Eldership Process—Selection of Elders

SECTION A – The process of becoming an elder/pastor involves at least the following steps:

- The man must be a member in good standing at Mars Hill who has demonstrated the calling, character, and competency of an elder.
- The man must make his desire to become an elder known to one of the elders and be interviewed by the lead elder for approval.
- His nomination must be approved by the Executive Elders without objection from anyone on the Council of Elders.
- If accepted as an elder nominee, the man will then undergo a period of training and testing.
- Training, prior to becoming an elder, will include whatever is deemed necessary to enhance the nominee's understanding of an elder's responsibilities as outlined in Scripture.
- Upon completing his training and testing process, the man must be approved by all elders without objection to be introduced to the church members as an official elder candidate.
- If approved as an elder candidate, members of Mars Hill will be notified that he has met the criteria of an elder. Anyone in or out of the church having a concern regarding the man's qualifications to lead as an elder will have four weeks to notify the elders, who can investigate the matter to determine if there is any reason to disqualify the man.
- If the elders do not find any reason to reject the man as an official elder, an official final vote of the elders shall be taken and if there are no objections to his installation from any elder, the man will be installed by the laying on of hands, after which he shall be considered an ordained and licensed minister of the gospel.
- Selection as an elder does not result in contract rights as an employee. All employees are "at will" and the employment relationship may be terminated without regard to such person continuing to serve as an elder.

## Article III

### The Eldership Service—Duration, Resignation, Removal

SECTION A – Once a man becomes an elder at Mars Hill it is expected that the man would continue to serve as an elder indefinitely.

SECTION B – If the elders determine that an elder needs an extended Sabbath for a season because of a legitimate need (e.g., illness, tragedy), then that elder can transition to an inactive and non-voting elder for a set period of time as determined by the lead elder.

Mars Hill Church 3/13/08 8:24 AM  
**Comment:** Change to Executive Elder Team.

SECTION C – To resign from the Council of Elders, an elder must notify the lead elder by letter, which the lead elder will then distribute to the other elders.

Mars Hill Church 3/13/08 8:24 AM  
**Comment:** Change to Executive Elder Team.

SECTION D – An elder who senses God’s call to leave Mars Hill to help plant a Mars Hill–sponsored church plant should make his desire known to the lead elder. If the elders confirm his calling, the elder will be sent out with blessing to help lead another church.

Mars Hill Church 3/13/08 8:24 AM  
**Comment:** Change to Executive Elder Team.

Mars Hill Church 3/13/08 8:24 AM  
**Comment:** Change to Executive Elder Team.

SECTION E – Any credible charge of moral impropriety, doctrinal error, or anything else that could displease the Lord or harm Mars Hill, against an elder shall be investigated by a taskforce established by the elders. During the investigation, the elder in question shall not be allowed to vote on any church matters and shall be placed on temporary leave. If the elder taskforce finds credible evidence of wrongdoing, the elder in question shall be tried by the elders according to the criteria of Scripture (e.g., James 3:1; 1 Timothy 5:19–21). A three-fourth’s vote of the remaining elders is necessary in order to find an elder guilty of the charges. If such a verdict is rendered by the remaining elders, the consequences for such a finding shall be determined by the remaining elders, with any action (up to and including removal) requiring another three-fourths vote of the remaining elders. In such instance, the members of Mars Hill shall be notified in writing of the process and results.

Mars Hill Church 3/13/08 8:24 AM  
**Comment:** This is a very important section related to accountability and judicious treatment of elders. It is good the way it is.

#### Article IV

##### The Eldership Structure and Procedure

SECTION A – Regarding the number of elders, there should always be a minimum of three elders without a maximum cap on eldership.

SECTION B – Elders shall be structured into multiple working teams with lead elders for those teams.

- Council of Elders – all Elders of Mars Hill Church
- Executive Elder Team – a small team of Elders, elected by the vote of the Council of Elders, who have organizational influence over the entire church and who can and will lead the organizational vision and mission of the church
- Lead Pastor
- Departmental Elder Teams – each department builds a team of specialists to lead, pastor, and manage the department
- Site Elder Teams – each site will have a team of elders to pastor and manage the details of the site
- Ad Hoc Elder Teams – these are teams assembled on an as-needed basis to handle a particular project or process; these teams will be assembled for a particular season to deal with particular issues

Mars Hill Church 3/13/08 8:24 AM  
**Comment:** Since the order of authority is outline here, the leader pastor is responsible ultimately to the council of elders and then to the executive elder team.

Mars Hill Church 3/13/08 8:24 AM  
**Comment:** Move under campus pastor in the chain of authority.

Mars Hill Church 3/13/08 8:24 AM  
**Comment:** Change all to Campus.

SECTION C – The duties and powers of Departmental, Site, and Ad Hoc Elder Teams; the Executive Elder Team; and the full Council of Elders are set forth in Articles V, VI, and VII respectively.

SECTION D – The full Council of Elders shall meet monthly or as determined by the executive elder team. The executive elder team shall meet monthly or more frequently on an as-needed basis as determined by the members of the executive elder team. Departmental, Site, and Ad Hoc Elder Teams may meet weekly or on an as-needed basis to adequately discharge their duties of overseeing their areas of responsibility.

Except as otherwise specified in these bylaws, meetings of the Council of Elders or an elder team may be called by the lead elder for the particular team upon 24 hours notice (or, in an emergency, upon less than 24 hours notice) via electronic notice (e-mail), telephone, or personal notice.

SECTION E – Quorum for purposes of a meeting of the full Council of Elders or an elder team shall be a simple majority of the voting members. An absentee vote may be given by an elder in advance of the meeting.

SECTION F – Except as otherwise specified in these bylaws for a particular action, the decision of the Council of Elders or an elder team shall be determined by a majority vote of those present at the meeting.

#### Article V

##### Departmental, Site, and Ad Hoc Elder Teams

SECTION A – Departmental, Site, and Ad Hoc Elder Teams may be established from time to time by resolution adopted by majority of the directors. The Departmental and Site Elder Teams shall be of indefinite duration; resolutions creating an Ad Hoc Elder Team shall specify the purpose and powers of such team and its duration. Subject to the limits specified in Section C, below, and RCW 24.03.115 or similar statute, a Departmental, Site, or Ad Hoc Elder Team shall have the powers and duties set forth in the resolution establishing such team.

SECTION B – The elders serving on a Departmental, Site, or Ad Hoc Elder Team shall be designated by the Council of Elders from time to time, and a particular elder may only be removed from an elder team by a decision of the Council of Elders.

SECTION C – No Departmental, Site, or Ad Hoc Elder Team shall have the powers or duties reserved for the Executive Elder Team or the full Council of Elders. The Departmental, Site, or Ad Hoc Elder Team shall notify the lead elder of any decision that might reasonably have church-wide significance in order to determine whether it should be submitted to the Executive Elder Team or full Council of Elders.

#### Article VI

##### The Executive Elder Team

SECTION A – The executive elder team is a team of firsts among equals within the Council of Elders. The executive elder team needs to collectively have comprehensive oversight over every aspect of the church. Executive elders primarily need to spend time leading leaders, seeing the big picture, and must be able to think globally regarding church-wide issues that will impact all of Mars Hill. Executive elders need to be good team-builders that work for unanimity among the individual elder teams they lead. Executive elders must work as a team for the protection and health of the church, representing the best interests of the entire church and not simply interests of a particular part of the church. This team needs to be filled with men who can make wise and efficient decisions as leaders trusted by the other elders and church members.

SECTION B – The size of the executive elder team shall be no less than four men and no more than seven men.

SECTION C – The executive elder team shall consist of men who meet the following criteria in addition to the qualifications and duties of an elder outlined in Article I:

- The elder must be a full-time employee of Mars Hill Church
- The elder must have served as an elder for at least one year
- The elder must nominate himself for consideration to be a member of the executive elder team.
- The elder must receive a two-thirds vote of approval by all elders

Mars Hill Church 3/13/08 8:24 AM

**Comment:** Change to Executive Elder Team.

Mars Hill Church 3/13/08 8:24 AM

**Comment:**

[RCW 24.03.155](#)

[Organization meetings.](#)

... [1]

Mars Hill Church 3/13/08 8:24 AM

**Comment:** Change order

Mars Hill Church 3/13/08 8:24 AM

**Comment:** Change to Executive Elder Team.

Mars Hill Church 3/13/08 8:24 AM

**Comment:** Strike this. This is an elected group chosen from and by the Council of elders. The office is designated with powers and responsibility, which is spelled out in what follows.



- If more than seven men meet these criteria, then those seven men receiving the highest number of votes will be accepted
- If there is a tie among two or more men for the seventh seat on the lead elder team, a new vote will be taken by all elders (on only the seventh position) with the man receiving the highest vote total being appointed to the lead elder team

SECTION D – The executive elder team will serve for a term of two years. Executive elder team terms shall commence on July 1. Every two years the process of electing the executive elder team shall be repeated. The election, by secret ballot, shall occur at the first all-elders' meeting of June preceding the end of the executive team's two-year term. Vacancies on the executive elder team shall be filled as soon as practical by the full Council of Elders.

SECTION E – Except for those powers and duties reserved for the full Council of Elders under Article VII, Section A and RCW 24.03.115 or similar statute, the following issues are reserved for determination by the executive elder team and may not be decided by a Departmental, Site, or Ad Hoc Elder Team:

- Establishing the overall vision for the entire church
- Purchase, sale, or rental of real estate
- Approving new services and venues
- Comprehensive operational budget line items
- Capital expenditures budget
- Hiring and firing of elders who are also employees (the employment status of an employee who is also an elder may be determined by the executive elder team, but such person's status as an elder is reserved to the full Council of Elders)
- Issues delegated or reserved to the executive elder team by resolution of the full Council of Elders

SECTION F – For an issue to meet the approval of the executive elder team it must receive a unanimous vote (abstention permitted).

SECTION G –Immediately following the election of the executive elder team pursuant to Section D, the full Council of Elders shall appoint members of the new executive elder team to serve as President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer to serve as officers for purposes of the Washington Nonprofit Corporation Act. The president shall be the chief executive officer of the corporation and the lead elder/pastor of the church described in Article I, Section B. He shall chair the meetings of the Council of Elders and the executive elder team. The Vice President shall serve the role of president during the absence of the president. The treasurer shall maintain proper books of account for the church. The secretary (who shall not also be the president) will ensure official minutes of each executive team meeting are kept, as well as meetings of the entire Elder Council, and will keep on file and authenticate all pertinent minutes and other appropriate documentation used in making decisions and/or taking action. An officer may be removed as such by the full Council of Elders without regard to such person's status on the executive elder team. A vacancy in any officer position shall be filled as soon as practical by the full Council of Elders.

#### Article VII

##### The Full Council of Elders

SECTION A – The following issues are reserved for the full Council of Elders, with any voting requirements other than simple majority specified for such issue.

- Election of an elder. Approval requires no objections (abstention permitted).

- Discipline or removal of elders. Voting requirements and procedure are set forth in Article III, Section E.
- Changes to and adoption of articles of incorporation or by-laws: three-fourths approval of all elders
- Any significant change to essential doctrine.
- : three-fourths approval
- Election or Removal of Executive Elder Team or Officers: as set forth in Article VI, Section C
- All powers reserved for the full Council of Elders as described in RCW 24.03.115 or similar statute.

Furthermore, any decision by any elder team, including the executive elder team, may be overridden by a simple majority vote of all elders. An objection to a decision by the executive elder team may be brought by any elder, and the matter scheduled for a review and vote, provided the objection was brought within a month of the decision being made.

SECTION B – To ensure that there is full disclosure to all elders, proper notice of all proposals requiring a vote of the full Council of elders or the executive elders shall be provided at least 30 days in advance, unless a credible emergency exists. Detailed minutes and voting record of each executive elder team meeting, as well as all other elder team meetings where a vote is taken (e.g., departmental, site, ad hoc) shall be published and disseminated to the elders, with records kept on file. The following information shall also be provided to every elder:

- Annual financial statements from CPA review
- Annual salaries and benefits list
- In-house prepared quarterly financial statements
- Quarterly church-wide tithing/giving report

#### ARTICLE VIII

##### Indemnification

SECTION A – The corporation shall have the following powers:

1. **Power to Indemnify.** The corporation may indemnify and hold harmless to the full extent permitted by applicable law each person who was or is made a party to or is threatened to be made a party to or is involved (including, without limitation, as a witness) in any actual or threatened action, suit or other proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative, and whether formal or informal (hereinafter a "proceeding"), by reason of the fact that he or she is or was a director, officer, employee or agent of the corporation or, being or having been such a director, officer, employee or agent, he or she is or was serving at the request of the corporation as a director, officer, employee, agent, trustee, or in any other capacity of another corporation or of a partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise, including service with respect to employee benefit plans, whether the basis of such proceeding is alleged action or omission in an official capacity or in any other capacity while serving as a director, officer, employee, agent, trustee or in any other capacity, against all expense, liability and loss (including, without limitation, attorneys' fees, judgments, fines, ERISA excise taxes or penalties and amounts to be paid in settlement) actually or reasonably incurred or suffered by such person in connection therewith. Such indemnification may continue as to a person who has ceased to be a director, officer, employee or agent of the corporation and shall inure to the benefit of his or her heirs and personal representatives.

2. **Power to Pay Expenses in Advance of Final Disposition.** The corporation may pay expenses incurred in defending any proceeding in advance of its final disposition (hereinafter "advancement of expenses"); provided, however, that any advancement of expenses shall be made to or on behalf of a director, officer, employee or agent only upon delivery to the corporation of (a) a written affirmation of the director's, officer's, employee's or agent's good faith belief that he or she has met the

Mars Hill Church 3/13/08 8:24 AM

**Comment:** The deleted language below, should be reinstated, since the Council of elders are responsible to maintain the ministry philosophy and mission of MHC.

Article I, Section B, states, the "Lead Elder to help the Council of Elders and the rest of the church in effectively obeying God's leading as revealed in Scripture." The Council of Elders exercise authority. MHC has operated on the assumption that Mark would always be the director, visionary and point person. Mark alluded to the possibility of moving on, which is credible when the pressure is sufficient to make that a viable option.

I remind you that Mark has publicly said he never would, yet he stated it as a real possibility. I take that possibility as real. So, the by-laws must not create an opening for a future lead pastor to change the mission or theology of MHC, just because he holds the office.

Mars Hill Church 3/13/08 8:24 AM

**Comment:** Include lead elder.

Mars Hill Church 3/13/08 8:24 AM

**Comment:** This provision must not be removed. It has never been miss used.

Mars Hill Church 3/13/08 8:24 AM

**Comment:**

[RCW 24.03.165](#)

[Procedure to amend articles of incorporat...](#) [2]

Mars Hill Church 3/13/08 8:24 AM

**Comment:** I don't want to hear about the elders not having to worry about liability. If you are an elder you are responsible for the affairs of the church, which by it's very nature assumes risk. The indemnification language gives protection to the fullest extent of the law. If someone is going to be an elder, they have to assume that risk.

standard of conduct described in RCW 23B.08.510, and (b) a written undertaking, by or on behalf of such director, officer, employee or agent, to repay all amounts so advanced if it shall ultimately be determined by final judicial decision from which there is no further right to appeal that such director, officer, employee or agent is not entitled to be indemnified under this Article or otherwise, which undertaking may be unsecured and may be accepted without reference to financial ability to make repayment.

3. Power to Enter Into Contracts. The corporation may enter into contracts with any person who is or was a director, officer, employee or agent of the corporation in furtherance of the provisions of this Article and may create a trust fund, grant a security interest in property of the corporation, or use other means (including, without limitation, a letter of credit) to ensure the payment of such amounts as may be necessary to effect indemnification as provided in this Article.

4. Expansion of Powers. If the Washington Business Corporation Act or the Washington Nonprofit Corporation Act is amended in the future to expand or increase the power of the corporation to indemnify, to pay expenses in advance of final disposition, to enter into contracts, or to expand or increase any similar or related power, then, without any further requirement of action by the directors of this corporation, the powers described in this Article shall be expanded and increased to the fullest extent permitted by the Washington Business Corporation Act and the Washington Nonprofit Corporation Act, as so amended.

5. Limitation of Powers. No indemnification shall be provided under this Article to any such person if the corporation is prohibited by the Washington Business Corporation Act or other applicable law as then in effect from paying such indemnification. For example, no indemnification shall be provided to any person in respect of any proceeding, whether or not involving action in his or her official capacity, in which he or she shall have been finally adjudged to be liable on the basis of intentional misconduct or knowing violation of law by the person, or from conduct of a director in violation of RCW 23B.08.310, or that the person personally received a benefit in money, property or services to which the person was not legally entitled.

#### SECTION B – Indemnification of Directors, Officers, Employees and Agents.

1. Directors. The corporation shall indemnify and hold harmless any person who is or was a director of this corporation, and pay expenses in advance of final disposition of a proceeding, to the full extent to which the corporation is empowered.

2. Officers, Employees, and Agents. The corporation, by action of its Board of Directors, may indemnify and hold harmless any person who is or was an officer, employee or agent of the corporation, and provide advancement of expenses to the full extent to which the corporation is empowered, or to any lesser extent which the Board of Directors may determine.

3. Character of Rights. To the extent the rights of indemnification and advancement of expenses have been conferred by or pursuant to this Article, such rights shall be contract rights.

4. Enforcement. A director (“Claimant”) shall be presumed to be entitled to indemnification and/or advancement of expenses under this Article upon submission of a written claim (and, in an action brought to enforce a claim for an advancement of expenses, where the undertaking in Section 1.2 above has been delivered to the corporation) and thereafter the corporation shall have the burden of proof to overcome the presumption that the Claimant is so entitled.

If a claim under this Article is not paid in full by the corporation within sixty days after a written claim has been received by the corporation, except in the case of a claim for advancement of expenses, in which case the applicable period shall be twenty days, the Claimant may at any time hereafter bring suit against the corporation to recover the unpaid amount of the claim. If successful in whole or in part, the Claimant shall also be entitled to be paid the expense of prosecuting such claim. Neither the failure of the corporation (including its Board of Directors or independent legal Council) to have made a determination prior to the commencement of such action that indemnification of or advancement of expenses to the Claimant is proper in the circumstances nor an actual determination by the corporation (including its Board of Directors or independent legal Council) that the Claimant is not entitled to indemnification or

advancement of expenses shall be a defense to the action or create a presumption that the Claimant is not so entitled.

5. Rights Not Exclusive. The right to indemnification and advancement of expenses conferred in this Article shall not be exclusive of any other right which any person may have or hereafter acquire under any statute, provision of the Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws of the corporation, agreement, vote of disinterested directors, or otherwise.

SECTION C – Insurance. The corporation may purchase and maintain insurance, at its expense, to protect itself and any director, officer, employee or agent of the corporation or any person who, while a director, officer, employee or agent of the corporation, is or was a director, officer, partner, trustee, employee or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, employee benefit plan or other enterprise against any expense, liability or loss, whether or not the corporation would have the power to indemnify such person against such expense, liability or loss under the Washington Business Corporation Act.

SECTION D – Survival of Benefits. Any repeal or modification of this Article shall not adversely affect any right of any person existing at the time of such repeal or modification.

SECTION E – Severability. If any provision of this Article or any application thereof shall be invalid, unenforceable or contrary to applicable law, the remainder of this Article, or the application of such provision to persons or circumstances other than those as to which it is held invalid, unenforceable or contrary to applicable law, shall not be affected thereby and shall continue in full force and effect.

SECTION F – Applicable Law. For purposes of this Article, “applicable law” shall at all times be construed as the applicable law in effect at the date indemnification may be sought, or the law in effect at the date of the action, omission or other event giving rise to the situation for which indemnification may be sought, whichever is selected by the person seeking indemnification.

#### ARTICLE IX

##### Amendments to Articles, Bylaws, and Doctrinal Statement

Proposed amendments to the articles of incorporation or bylaws shall generally be approved by the executive elder team prior to submission to the full Council of Elders. Voting requirements for amendment are set forth in Article VII, Section A.

#### ARTICLE X

##### Members of Mars Hill Church

SECTION A – Mars Hill Church shall not have members for purposes of the Washington Nonprofit Corporation Act. The reference to “member” in these bylaws is a spiritual and theological term that does not have any civil effect for purposes of state law (Romans 12:45-5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27). Consistent with the biblical concept of member and this Section A, members shall not have voting rights.

SECTION B – All persons desiring to unite with this Church shall sign an application to become a part of the fellowship, complete the required member process, sign the member covenant, and shall appear before at least one church member making a confession or reaffirmation of their faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Candidates coming in by transfer of letter from another church will follow the same procedure. Candidates having been approved by at least one church member must affirm by signature their agreement with the Doctrinal Statement and the Bylaws of Mars Hill. They must also agree to support in worship, giving, and service, and satisfy other conditions of fellowship defined by the Council of Elders.

Mars Hill Church 3/13/08 8:24 AM

**Comment:** I think I need to say it again, the Bylaws should not be changed drastically. What has been communicated, is a complete rewrite. Present what you will, but it must not diminish the authority of the Council of Elders. If anything, considering the communication, and lack of communication of resent, the authority of the Council of Elders should take back authority given up in the last Bylaw rewrite.  
I also want to see an open meeting, with open discussion of each article and section, with or without the Executive Elders.  
If the council requests legal Counsel it will be provided.

Mars Hill Church 3/13/08 8:24 AM

**Comment:** I take “generally” to mean that this process is not mandatory. In other words, the Council of Elders can over rule and choose a task force of it’s own choosing to create amendments.

SECTION C – Church Discipline. The threefold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (1 Corinthians 5:6), to edify believers by deterring sin (1 Corinthians 5), and to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Galatians 6:1).

1. Members of Mars Hill Church and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church who err in doctrine, or who engage in conduct that violates Scripture as determined by an elder team (e.g., site, departmental, ad hoc, executive, all-elder council), shall be subject to church discipline. Each potential case of discipline will be weighed on its own merits and dealt with according to the following Scriptural examples:

- When a Christian sins against another Christian (Matthew 18:15–22)
- When someone is a gossip (Proverbs 16:28; Proverbs 20:19; Corinthians 12:20–21)
- When someone who professes faith lives in sin without repentance (1 Corinthians 5:1-13)
- When someone continually blasphemes God (1 Timothy 1:18–20)
- When a Christian sins and is repentant (Galatians 6:1–5)
- When someone encourages false doctrine (Acts 20:25–31; 1 Timothy 1:4–7; 1 Timothy 4:1–8)
- When someone is a habitual doctrinal debater (2 Timothy 2:14–26)
- When someone will only listen to false teachers (2 Timothy 4:1–5)
- When someone is sincere but deceived (2 Corinthians 11:3–4, 13–15)
- When a teacher is in moral sin or doctrinal error (James 3:1)
- When an elder is in moral sin or doctrinal error (1 Timothy 5:19–21)

2. Members of Mars Hill Church are not guaranteed confidentiality regarding issues of church discipline, and understand that in submitting themselves to the authority of the church, issues of a sensitive or personal nature may become known to others. This includes, but is not limited to, notification of the authorities if a crime has been committed or if a real threat of someone being endangered exists (Romans 13:1–7), as well as other violations of scripture that may not result in physical danger.

3. Those who are members of the church or who regularly participate in church activities may be dismissed from the church by the agreement of at least two elders. The dismissal of a church member may be made known to all church members. If the offense is a publicly known matter the executive elder team has the discretion to determine if the member's discipline should be made known to the entire church (1 Corinthians 5:1–5).

4. A person dismissed from Mars Hill for disciplinary reasons may be reinstated to full membership if the person's repentance is accepted as genuine by the elder team that oversaw the person's discipline.

5. Each member of this church, and every other professing Christian who regularly attends or fellowships with this church, agrees that there shall be no appeal to any court because of a discipline process or dismissal. A member who is under discipline by the church, as defined in the previous paragraphs, forfeits and waives the right to resign from Mars Hill Church. Resignation is possible only by a member who is in good standing and who is not under any disciplinary action.

6. Separate and apart from the process of church discipline, but subject to the discretion and approval of an elder team (e.g., site, departmental, ad hoc, executive, all-elder council), a member, non-member regular participant in church activities, or other individual, may be notified that he or she is not to be present upon church premises for such a period of time as is deemed necessary for the safety and well-being of others on church premises. Such required absence may, but need not, be concurrent with church discipline of that person.

7. Separate and apart from the process of church discipline, but subject to the discretion and approval of an elder team (e.g., site, departmental, ad hoc, executive, all-elder

council), members who have not met all of the criteria of church membership for a period of six months or longer may be removed as a member of Mars Hill Church and may be asked to no longer attend Mars Hill.

ARTICLE XI  
Administrative Provisions

SECTION A – Definitions.

“Deliver” means: (a) mailing; (b) transmission by facsimile equipment, for purposes of delivering a demand, consent, notice, or waiver to the corporation or one of its directors or officers; (c) electronic transmission, in accordance with the director’s or officer’s consent, for purposes of delivering a demand, consent, notice, or waiver to the corporation or one of its directors or officers under Section B.

“Electronic transmission” means an electronic communication (a) not directly involving the physical transfer of a record in a tangible medium and (b) that may be retained, retrieved, and reviewed by the sender and the recipient thereof, and that may be directly reproduced in a tangible medium by a sender and recipient.

“Execute,” “executes,” or “executed” means (a) signed, with respect to a written record or (b) electronically transmitted along with sufficient information to determine the sender’s identity, with respect to an electronic transmission.

“Record” means information inscribed on a tangible medium or contained in an electronic transmission.

“Tangible medium” means a writing, copy of a writing, facsimile, or a physical reproduction, each on paper or on other tangible material.

Any term not defined in these Bylaws shall have the definition in Chapter 24.03 RCW, as presently enacted or hereafter amended.

SECTION B – Electronic Notice.

1. Consent to Electronic Notice. In order to consent to notice via electronic transmission, a director or officer must, in a record, designate in the consent the appropriate electronic format and the address or system to which notices may be electronically transmitted, for example, specify an email address to which such electronic transmission may be sent.

2. Revocation of Consent to Electronic Notice. A director or officer who has consented to receipt of electronically transmitted notices may revoke the consent by delivering a revocation to the corporation, in the form of a record (sent to the attention of the secretary). Additionally, the consent of any director or officer is revoked if the corporation is unable to electronically transmit two consecutive notices given by the corporation in accordance with the consent, and this inability becomes known to the secretary of the corporation or other person responsible for giving the notice. The inadvertent failure by the corporation to treat this inability as a revocation does not invalidate any meeting or other action.

SECTION C – Effective Date of Delivery. If notice is mailed, it shall be deemed delivered when deposited in the mail properly addressed to the director or officer at his or her address as it appears on the records of the corporation with postage thereon prepaid. If the notice is by electronic transmission, it shall be deemed delivered when it is transmitted electronically in accordance with the consent of the director or officer. All other notice in tangible medium shall be deemed delivered upon receipt.

Amendments:

Elder representation:

The RCM provided for legal remote meeting, where telecommunicated meeting can be official. We have the technology to make this possible.

Mars Hill Church 3/13/08 8:24 AM  
**Comment:** There is no distribution clause for assets in the case of MHC dissolving. This needs to be added. RCW [24.03.030](#)

**RCW 24.03.075**

**Meetings of members and committees of members.**

Meetings of members and committees of members may be held at such place, either within or without this state, as stated in or fixed in accordance with the bylaws. In the absence of any such provision, all meetings must be held at the registered office of the corporation in this state.

An annual meeting of the members must be held at the time stated in or fixed in accordance with the bylaws. Failure to hold the annual meeting at the designated time does not work a forfeiture or dissolution of the corporation.

Special meetings of the members may be called by the president or by the board of directors. Special meetings of the members may also be called by other officers or persons or number or proportion of members as provided in the articles of incorporation or the bylaws. In the absence of a provision fixing the number or proportion of members entitled to call a meeting, a special meeting of members may be called by members having one-twentieth of the votes entitled to be cast at the meeting.

Except as otherwise restricted by the articles of incorporation or the bylaws, members and any committee of members of the corporation may participate in a meeting by conference telephone or similar communications equipment so that all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time. Participation by that method constitutes presence in person at a meeting.

And

**RCW 24.03.085**

**Voting.**

(1) The right of the members, or any class or classes of members, to vote may be limited, enlarged or denied to the extent specified in the articles of incorporation or the bylaws. Unless so limited, enlarged or denied, each member, regardless of class, shall be entitled to one vote on each matter submitted to a vote of members.

(2) A member may vote in person or, if so authorized by the articles of incorporation or the bylaws, may vote by mail, by electronic transmission, or by proxy in the form of a record executed by the member or a duly authorized attorney-in-fact. No proxy shall be valid after eleven months from the date of its execution, unless otherwise provided in the proxy.

(3) If specifically permitted by the articles of incorporation or bylaws, whenever proposals or directors or officers are to be elected by members, the vote may be taken by mail or by electronic transmission if the name of each candidate and the text of each proposal to be voted upon are set forth in a record accompanying or contained in the notice of meeting. If the bylaws provide, an election may be conducted by electronic transmission if the corporation has designated an address, location, or system to which the ballot may be electronically transmitted and the ballot is electronically transmitted to the designated address, location, or system, in an executed electronically transmitted record. Members voting by mail or electronic transmission are present for all purposes of quorum, count of votes, and percentages of total voting power present.

(4) The articles of incorporation or the bylaws may provide that in all elections for directors every member entitled to vote shall have the right to cumulate his [or her] vote and to give one candidate a number of votes equal to his [or her] vote multiplied by the number of directors to be elected, or by distributing such votes on the same principle among any number of such candidates.

## Munson response to first Bylaw communication from Bent Meyer

*What follows related to Jamie Munson requesting a meeting to discuss my concerns represented in the previous meeting. The short meeting occurred in my office.*

*Jamie asked me what I wanted.*

*I told him I wanted language that would preserve and strengthen accountability in the governance structure.*

*He commented that he was concerned I was being put in a place to be a fall guy for others. This implied to me there were others who were also concerned about the language and shift of power in the proposal. Surely, others will stand up and be counted.*

*I told him my concerns were my own and I was completely responsible for my own language and observations.*

*He told me the proposal was likely to pass as it is, with little configuration change. His interest in meeting me was to persuade me to adopt it.*

**From:** Pastor Jamie Munson  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 05, 2007 5:08 PM  
**To:** Pastor Bent Meyer  
**Cc:** Pastor Bill Clem  
**Subject:** RE: Mars Hill Church - Bylaws - Final - 2-11-06.doc

Bent – The 1<sup>st</sup> Revised Draft of the bylaws will be going out shortly to all of the elders. We need to meet in person to discuss your email and bylaw comments, I won't get into a lengthy email discussion. I'm available anytime tomorrow and am happy to have Bill sit in with us. You name the time.

Sincerely,

Jamie

**Jamie Munson**  
**Lead Pastor**

Mars Hill Church  
1401 NW Leary Way  
Seattle, WA 98107

O: 206.706.6641  
F: 206.706.6792  
E: [jamie@marshillchurch.org](mailto:jamie@marshillchurch.org)  
W: marshillchurch.org

**From:** Pastor Bent Meyer  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 05, 2007 8:22 PM  
**To:** Pastor Jamie Munson  
**Subject:** RE: Mars Hill Church - Bylaws - Final - 2-11-06.doc

I have an hour at 5 PM. I don't have enough time to travel since I am speaking to a group tomorrow evening at Ballard.

**From:** Pastor Jamie Munson  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 06, 2007 9:27 AM  
**To:** Pastor Bent Meyer  
**Cc:** Pastor Bill Clem  
**Subject:** RE: Mars Hill Church - Bylaws - Final - 2-11-06.doc



That works for me Bent. I'll see you in Ballard at 5pm.

You are welcome to join us Bill, I'll leave that up to Bent whether he wants you to be there.

Jamie

**Jamie Munson**  
**Lead Pastor**

Mars Hill Church  
1401 NW Leary Way  
Seattle, WA 98107

### 2007 Bylaws Revision – Summary of Changes 9/05/07

We are undertaking a full revision to the Bylaws to address the significant organizational structure changes made over the summer and to deal with the expansion of the elders from the place where a small handful of men could reasonably meet to govern Mars Hill. Our Bylaws are obsolete and prudent legal Council advised that we update this basic governance document to square with our new structure.

#### By-laws re-write process, timeline and approval

- August 14<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> – First Open Comment Period
- September 5<sup>th</sup> – First Draft of Revision sent to All Elders
- September 10<sup>th</sup> – Elders Meeting – By-laws discussion
- September 24<sup>th</sup> – Second Draft of Revision complete
- September 24<sup>th</sup> – October 5<sup>th</sup> – Second Open Comment Period
- October 9<sup>th</sup> – Final Draft of Revision Complete
- October 9<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> – Final Comments (Mtg. scheduled if necessary)
- October 29<sup>th</sup> – Elders Meeting – Vote on Final Draft (3/4 approval required)

Below are the substantive changes made in this first draft:

1. By-law simplification
  - a. Many of the details found in previous versions of our by-laws contain more details than are necessary for operating policies, procedures and processes. For example the process of becoming an elder is an issue that needs to be modified regularly and should be found in a separate policy document, so that the bylaws do not need to be changed every time we make a slight policy adjustment.
  - b. Re-ordering of the articles for a more logical flow.
  - c. Our by-laws need to establish the proper teams to govern the church and make decisions and not try to make a decision in advance for every possible situation.
  - d. Church Leadership Book – Pastor Mark has published our church leadership book which contains our Biblical position on the qualifications for becoming an elder, Jesus as our Senior Pastor, etc. This allows us to shorten and simplify our by-laws by referring to separate policy documents and position papers without having to duplicate all of the same details in the by-laws.
2. Establishment of a basic three-level structure of governance and the shifting of business affairs and liability. There are checks and balances provided for all three levels in order to provide proper accountability.

Level 1 – Full Council of Elders (every elder from every campus)

- Legal Members of the Non-Profit Corporation

Level 2 – Board of Directors

- Legal governing board of the Non-Profit Corporation
- Board of Directors is made up of 10-13 elders
  - Executive Elders (3-6 elders)
  - Supervising Elders (4 elders)
  - Non-Paid Elders (3 elders)

Level 3 – Executive Elders (3-6 elders)

- Legal committee of the Board of Directors

3. The full council of elders are the members for purposes of state law. They have two formal responsibilities as members of the corporation which ensure that the leadership and theological integrity of the church stays in tact.
  - a. election of "elected" board of directors
  - b. approval of changes to the doctrinal statement.
  
4. The elected directors and the executive elder team comprise the board of directors. The executive elder team is legally a committee of the board of directors. The intent here is to have a Board of Directors to perform three important functions:
  - a. A group of three unpaid elders elected to serve who can provide great accountability without a conflict of interest.
  - b. Four supervisory elders elected to provide accountability and reality check, especially from a "field" perspective.
  - c. Three to six executive elders appointed by the Board to provide directional leadership and continuity of operations for Mars Hill Church.
  
5. Addition of an article on deacons. Deacons serve as the majority of our paid staff and it was appropriate and timely to describe and include them in the Bylaws.

Your review of this first draft of revised Bylaws is requested. Please bring your comments and suggestions to the Elders Meeting on September 10<sup>th</sup> so we can discuss and refine this draft.

**EXECUTIVE TEAM | TUESDAY, September 11th 2007, 9:00AM-11:00AM at the Ballard Campus**

Elders Present: Jamie Munson, Bubba Jennings, Scott Thomas, Mark Driscoll

Deacons Present: Chad Toulouse

**Meeting Minutes**

The meeting of the Mars Hill Church Executive Team was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Pastor Jamie Munson.

**Old Business**

- Bylaws Additions / Changes
  - o Discussion ensued regarding changes to the 1<sup>st</sup> Draft of the Bylaws. A summary of the proposed changes will be sent to all of the Elders along with the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft of the Bylaws.

**New Business**

- Board of Directors - Slate of Nominees
  - o Discussion ensued regarding the proposed nominees for the Board of Directors. The final slate will be completed and sent to all of the elders by September 28<sup>th</sup> to be voted on at the October 29<sup>th</sup> all elders meeting.
- Next Elders Meeting
  - o 10/29/07 in Ballard from 3pm-7pm
  - o Vote will be taken on final draft of Bylaws
  - o Vote will be taken for approval of elder candidates
  - o Review and discussion of proposed updated Doctrinal Statement
- Expansion Capital Projects Planning
  - o The current capital projects were discussed. Some details are still pending.
    - Wedgwood – Launch Costs \$300,000
      - Services begin October 7, 2007
      - Pastor James Harleman to work with EE team regarding fundraising efforts.
      - Initial funding provided by Bank of America
    - Eastside (soft launch) – Technology Costs \$100,000

- Services begin October 7, 2007
- Pastor Jesse Winkler to work with EE team regarding fundraising efforts.
- Initial funding provided by Bank of America
- West Seattle – Technology Costs \$100,000
  - Video services begin October 7, 2007
  - Pastor Adam Sinnett to work with EE team regarding fundraising efforts.
  - Initial funding provided by Bank of America
- Ballard – Technology, Building Renovation Costs \$1,550,000
  - Satellite transmission and 5 services begin October 7, 2007
  - Initial funding provided by Bank of America
- Shoreline –
  - The Shoreline campus will be looking for approximately 2,500 square feet of office space to lease temporarily until a permanent facility is located. The leased space will function as a ministry center for the campus.
- Downtown – Purchase Cost - \$3,950,000
  - Appraisal came in at \$5,050,000
  - Bank to finance - \$3,160,000
  - Church to fundraise - \$800,000 for down payment
  - Fundraising Deadline – October 23<sup>rd</sup>
  - Feasibility study is complete and all contingencies have been waived.
  - Closing on Property – October 25<sup>th</sup>
- The General Fund –
  - The projects above will be paid for through a combination of fundraising and bank financing. The initial fundraising requirement is \$800,000.
  - The general fund will maintain a cash reserve of approximately \$800,000 to cover cash flow fluctuations for the general operations of the church.
- Fundraising Principles (draft status, further discussion needed)
  - First-fruits for campus specific projects are given by members of the campus taking on the project.
  - Campus Pastors need to lead the charge for fundraising for their campus specific needs.
  - Secondary fundraising efforts are put before every campus to promote and share in the expansion of the mission of Mars Hill globally.
  - A strategic plan must be built for every fundraising effort that takes into consideration.

- Timeline needs
  - General Fund surplus to account for shifted giving from general to building
- Future Capital Projects
  - Permanent Eastside and Shoreline Facility
  - Improvements to Downtown Facility
  - Other existing campus improvements

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

**9/11/2006 communicate from Bill Clem related to first Bylaw concerns**

**From:** Pastor Bill Clem

**Sent:** Thursday, September 06, 2007 3:25 PM

**To:** Pastor Bent Meyer; Pastor Jamie Munson

**Subject:** Re: Mars Hill Church - Bylaws - Final - 2-11-06.doc

Bent & Jamie

I apologize for not making this meeting

1. I have been at the firs Tue – Sat, I speak in the AM and have been taking afternoon and evening to do some study of Core 4 & CCEF materials, and
2. I was unable to get on line to check for this meeting until about noon today

Jamie, I was the facilitator for the group Bent was in on the Elder's retreat, Bent did not demonstrate rebellion or entitlement.

Bent, I think your point about lack of processing the changes with an anticipated approval is a valid concern.

I am interested in getting us to the best space, in the quickest amount of time with the least amount of hemorrhage. I don't know what that space is, or what the pace will be – but I am not convinced that the hemorrhaging that was identified at Whistler has been stopped.

So, please count me in on the process.

Bill

## **Account of Scott Thomas meeting with Paul Petry and Bent Meyer in the park.**

*By this time I had a copy of the first draft of the proposed bylaws.*

*I took a lunch break at a small park just north of the Ballard building. I was eating lunch when Paul Petry called and asked if he could join me, he had a Counseling case he wanted to discuss with me, since I had met with the person in the past. He joined me about ten minutes later. While we talked about the issue on his mind, Scott Thomas called wanting to meet with Paul. Paul informed him he was eating lunch with me. Scott is reported to have said good I need to meet with Dave Kraft and both of you.*

*He joined us a short time later and said he wanted to talk to both of us about the bylaw proposal. He continued to say that it was our responsibility as the older respected elders to get the younger elders to sign on the bylaw proposal. He further said, if we could not do that we should consider resigning.*

*This comment immediately established the lines that I had to choose to not cross or cross. I took Scott's words as a threat as I found out much later Paul did also.*

*I engaged him with my concerns about the language of the proposal, that accountability was virtually absent. I told him about my intention to talk to the other elders about my concerns.*

*He immediately showed alarm and told me not to do it that way. He told me to only talk to those up the chain of command from me, which would mean Mike Wilkerson. I told him that was a poor idea, since Mike was in such a vulnerable position and could not speak his mind without jeopardizing his standing at the church. Scott then said to take to Bill Clem.*

*You will see that I followed that instruction believing there would yet be open debate. I was also hoping other elders would be deeply concerned and voice those concerns at the appropriate time. What I didn't factor was how effectively each one of us were put in our boxes and persuaded that if we talked with one another we would be creating disunity, we would be factious, and Mark's favorite word disrespectful of senior leadership.*

*In retrospect, each of us were like frogs sitting pleasantly in a pan of water, not noticing the chef turning up the heat that would kill any semblance of authority we possessed. I am, as well as, all the other elder's responsibility for all that lead up to this and for those currently at Mars Hill Church what follows.*



## Scenario bylaw testing

On 9/12/07 6:56 PM, "Pastor Bent Meyer" <bent@marshallchurch.org> wrote:

I spoke to Mike about my thinking related to the bylaws, primarily, how I was evaluating them. This is the nature of my approach reported to Mike.

I am taking the language of the proposed bylaws and running various scenarios through them to see what the possible outcomes might be. In doing so, I have been alarmed by what has resulted. The following are some of my starting questions and the results. I would invite you to run the scenarios yourself to check me.

A push back I have already received, is that I am running what-if scenarios, which are frivolous and not valid. I don't take this criticism very seriously, because the bylaw rewrite is based on projections of what-if scenarios to begin with. It is because of the likelihood of these what-if scenarios that propelled a bylaw change.

I know, once again, I am taking a risk in raising these issues. I don't like being in this place, because I love what I do and want to continue without punishment, or lose to my ability to serve. Scott Thomas, has already met, with primarily Paul, and me, saying that we are the elder statesmen, with a responsibility to create unity and consensus. If we are in great disagreement, maybe we should consider moving on. I will not voluntarily move on, nor do I intend on disrespectfully disagree or address imbalances in the powers being presented to us disagreeable in attitude. The season ahead is very complicated and the bylaw direction makes sense in the aggregate. I just see holes in it.

I have made the commitment that once these bylaws or some version of them are in place, I will regard them as the law of the City and abide and support them as per Rom 13. I simply want to be understood if I am correct and language replaced or added that will safeguard the integrity of every level of leadership be place in the document.

My comments will appear as worst case scenarios, and admittedly they are. I also admit MHC would be near a church split under some of these conditions, or would suffer one afterward, but you know, as well as I, that church leadership will do unthinkably dumb things on the basis of what they think is "scriptural principle". I want to safeguard against that possibility. I also admit, implied in even contemplating most of the scenarios implies major sin issues or the part of the leadership, but the language of the bylaw is what it is and leave gates open for wrong doing. Concentrated supreme authority would seem to guarantee stability and fidelity, until a new lead pastor takes over and the Board of Directors changes along with the pressures associated with the consequences of such on the population and financial cash flow of MHC. Then the proposed bylaws would be potentially problematic. The assumption is that Mark will outlive most of the current leadership is not guaranteed. The bylaws must be considered in light of catastrophic possibilities, as well as, ease nimble decision making and action. The nimbleness Mark speaks of is well taken, with careful consideration. They are partnered not necessary oppositional (nimbleness and consideration).

Check me out. I trust you both to see and speak into my folly, but I have to at least risk voicing my specific concerns.

1. Once this bylaw change is made stripping the Council of elder from any future authority for input, determine the language, and rights to initiate or block future changes, can the Board of Director turn around and change the bylaws at will at anytime from what the current council of elders have agreed to? In other words, is this an interim bylaw change as Jamie directly told to me it is? **My running of this scenario is "Yes", all powers the council of elders have in this area are forever lost and "Yes" the Board of Directors could start the process of changing the**

**bylaw language immediately upon ratification. I'm not saying they will, but they could with no consequence from the council of elders. (See, Article V, Section A, the first bullet.)**

2. Upon the passing of Mark to new employment (not out of the question, since Mark, as much as, said he has contemplated such on a few occasions. He certainly has attractive offers), death, or removal, MHC would take a nose dive in population and funds. This would put enormous pressure on whoever followed to reverse the effect. What compromises would the Board of Director's make to rite the ship? **The scenario would not prevent recluse decisions being made by a relative few. They would have exclusive rights to all decisions, without regard to the council of elders. I admit this would be catastrophic, but it could happen tomorrow. No one knows what bus has Mark's name on the grill.**
3. There will be 4 men selected from the council of elders (the break men). What would happen if one or two of those men were thoughtfully detailed minded to sift the details of consideration to frustrate others on the Board of Director to fire them? Or another scenario, in which the person was in complete opposition to a proposal, could he be removed preemptively, thereby eliminating his possible deciding vote? **The answer is "Yes". The person or person's could be removed without regard for the will of the council of elders. A preemptive firing would not stop the vote for new members to be voted from the council of elders, since a quorum would one require half the board of director count.**
4. Could a board of director who is elected from the council of elders be intimidate by the possibility of being fired for any reason at any time? **The answer is "Yes", since he has no protection from the council of elders to overrule.**
5. The proposal entitles the Executive elders to have exclusive rights to select the 4 Board of Director members for the council of elders. The Council of elders have the right to accept by a yes vote each of the nominees. What happens if after experiencing the cohort of kings rule, the Council of elder believes it is essential to create a broader spectrum of leader gifting, but the Executive Elders refuse to present nominees with other gifting? **The Executive Elders could insist and the Council refuse which would create a stalemate. The existing board of directors could preemptively eliminate the troublesome opposition to achieve their will without consequence from the council of elders, since their vote would be null.**
6. If a group of elders from a campus or multi-campus had cause to call a special meeting to suspend an Executive Elder, could the Board of Director's upon verifying this pending action, fire those elders preemptively, nullifying their efforts to be heard and/or simply ignore them all together. This, of course, assumes they have exhausted all the avenues provided by the bylaws. **The answer is "Yes". They could be fired without recourse. The council of elders is powerless to prevent this. They (Council of elder) do not have the power to remove an Executive elder/Directors that is reserved for the elected Directors. They do have the power to remove elected Directors.**
7. Would the council of elders receive transcript minute of elders meeting or summaries under the catch all "discussion followed"? **There is no provision in the bylaws for detailed meeting minutes. The Council of elder could receive the bar minimum requirements that constitute legal minutes.**
8. From the way the bylaws read in the draft, will the ratio of Executive Elders decision privilege be stopped by the resignation or termination of either an elected Director or a non paid Director? In other words can the ratio of Executive Elder on the Board of Directors ever number more than the elected Directors? **"Yes", to the latter, since the bylaw draft does not specifically say the number of elected member and non-members are minimums. The former question would also be "Yes" if the elected member and non-members are minimums. No voted decision could be made until the vacancies of filled. Either way there is a problem. The ratio could be out of balance for sometime while crucial issues are being decided because an elected member was terminated or resigned for whatever reason. Or progress could be stopped on crucial votes because the ratio was out of balance due to ratio requirements.**

9. Could the Board of Directors under the guidance of a new lead pastor and board members decide previous leadership had made huge errors in defining elders as we do and instead determined they should all be removed as elders and made ordained deacons? **Again, the bylaws allow for this possibility.**

I don't think I have seen or thought of all the other possibilities, I am sure there are some more.

Part of the cure:

I propose the language of Article III, Section E be changed to "Discipline and removal of the elders shall be consistent with the standards set by the Bible as understood by 2/3's of the members of the Council of Elders. **An elder who is also an employee is employed at will and may be terminated as an employee at any time, with or without cause as specified and reported to the council of elders within one week as by the Executive Elder Team or its designee (e.g. campus pastor or employee's immediate supervisor).** Any such termination shall automatically result in suspension as an elder pending discipline or removal as such by the Board of Directors. If this elder (paid or unpaid) is serving on the Board of Directors, removal and termination review and ratified or reversed shall be done by the Council of Elders.

"Cause" in the above could include, ministry removal when all need for his service have expired; the termination a campus and the other campuses could not absorbed the elder in his paid capacity.

Without cause language, is wide open to abuse and no notification of such to the electing Council is problematic.

This is for your eyes and consideration. I would like to send them to Scott Thomas, but think it wise to wait upon you scrutiny and provide me with feedback.

Thank you

Bent

Bent Meyer 6/18/14 6:16 PM

**Comment:** Termination "at will" is a corporate term for unilateral, non review, non appeal action by an authority or designated authority. This is rife for abuse.

## Bill Clem's response to scenario testing

**From:** Pastor Bill Clem  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 13, 2007 5:46 PM  
**To:** Pastor Bent Meyer  
**Subject:** Re: Bylaws

Bent,

I just replied, but I think it may have been eaten in cyber space, so I will do another quick response. I will continue to read through you scenarios and see what I think the bylaws say and do not say about them.

One thing that is clear from your questions is: The Elders have lost the ability to be gatekeepers of the church. This gets dismissed by calling it congregational government. I don't think congregational government is evil, it is just that it allows the least qualified to have a voice in directing the church, if, however, each member of the congregation qualified as an elder – maybe that congregational government would be superior to an oligarchy. Acts 6 seems to empower a congregation with nominating power.

Bill

To: Bill Clem  
From: Bent Meyer  
Date: 9/15/2007

Thanks for reminding me of that piece of justification (congregational rule). Responsible and qualified authority rests in the elders. I told Scott, as long as Mars Hill is incorporated under one name and ruling authority, I as an elder cannot surrender authority. I can't tell God, whatever happens it's not my responsibility, remember, I gave it over to the 13. I'm not responsible.

God will say, "NO! you were called! That was not your imagination. You can't give it away."

Now, if the bylaws pass as written, the Board of Director's can determine that all elders that are not Executive, Directors or Supervisory are not elders, since elders are kingly. Those elders that are not in this class will be renamed to Deacon's, since they perform functions. There would be no arguing, stopping, or appeal.

I have talked with a few other elders, who have taken the "trust" language completely by blind faith. They didn't read the document carefully or think through the consequential rights being given up and gained in the language. I don't think they understand this a profoundly legal document.

I am also baffled by the language slamming liberal denominations that hold title to facilities and authority, when the way Mars Hill Church is being set up, will do that very same thing.

Thank you for your consideration and time. I am doubly grateful, since the time you have with Jeanne is priceless.

## Mike Wilkerson response to scenario testing

**From:** Pastor Mike Wilkerson  
**Sent:** Sunday, September 16, 2007 5:13 PM  
**To:** Pastor Bent Meyer  
**Cc:** Pastor Bill Clem  
**Subject:** RE: Bylaws

Bent, I've read this, and generally, it makes sense to me. Admittedly, these are worst-case scenarios. But it seems factual. Except for #8 below—I'm not sure about it because I had a hard time following it—but I think it's wrong.

Because of my current awkward situation, I would like to consciously focus my statements on the bare analysis of the by-laws by your scenarios (i.e. "check your work"). By that, I don't mean to imply that you *should* or *shouldn't* do anything with these observations. I think it would be wise to check that with other men like Bill or Scott.

I've included brief comments on them in-line below. The theme you'll notice is that in many of the cases, the worst-case outcomes you describe will only happen if the MAJORITY of the Board chooses them. And that Board MUST always have a MAJORITY of non-Exec Elders on it, including 3 Unpaid Elders. Even if a new lead pastor came in, he would have to manipulate and lead astray a MAJORITY of those board members in order to do some of the outrageous things that you note below. He could not change the bylaws to suit his purposes. He could not single-handed change the composition of the Board to suit his purposes. He could not fire at his whim.

Bent Meyer 8/22/14 5:11 PM

**Comment:** Exactly and that is what has happened, but the person doing it is Mark.

-mike

## Mike Wilkerson follow-up response to scenario testing

**From:** Pastor Mike Wilkerson  
**Sent:** Monday, September 17, 2007 8:09 AM  
**To:** Pastor Bent Meyer  
**Cc:** Pastor Bill Clem  
**Subject:** RE: Bylaws

It occurred to me this morning that there is one more angle on this. I should revise my previous comments that say that it requires a MAJORITY of the Board to make some of the decisions in your scenarios. That is true for the removal of an elder. But it is not necessarily true for the FIRING of an elder as a staff person. This may be done by the EE. (Article VI, Section E) The EE's decisions must be unanimous (abstention permitted). (Article VI, Section F) So, hypothetically, that would allow for one man to fire another man only if he is an EE, and if the other EEs step back and abstain from the vote.

However, a MAJORITY of the Board can override a decision like this. But a special meeting of the Board would probably have to be called to make that happen. Those special meetings can be called by the President (who is an EE). Or by a third of the Board (so, about 4 guys). This can be done on 24 hours' notice—so if they needed to act fast, they can. (Article V, Section I)

These kinds of quick decisions by a small number of men could also happen if the EE commissions a "committee". Those committees can have as few as 2 directors on them, and their decisions can be made on behalf of the EE. So they have the authority of the EE. Of course, the EE could override their decisions, and the Board can override the EEs decisions—so there's some backup. But it's possible that some quick decisions could be made that would be hard to override in a timely fashion which *may* allow for some of the scenarios to happen.

-mike

## Second Draft of Bylaw proposal

**From:** Pastor Jamie Munson  
**Sent:** Monday, September 17, 2007 3:08 PM  
**To:** elders@marshallchurch.org  
**Cc:** Tim Beltz; Amy Lockman; Chad Toulouse  
**Subject:** 2nd Draft of the Bylaws

Elders – Attached is the Second Revised Draft of the Bylaws.

Here is the summary of changes, taking into consideration the comments at the elders meeting, other comments I've received from Elders, Executive Elder discussion and our attorney's further input.

### **Board Composition**

As we reviewed further the proposed parameters for the board composition it became obvious that by only allowing "Supervisory Elders" and requiring 3 "Non-Paid" elders to be on the board that it is too restrictive. The language in Article V Section B has been modified to allow for more flexibility in selecting any Elder that would serve the church well by being on the board. The supervisory elders and non-paid elders have been merged into a single group while still keeping the same philosophy for the team which is: more non-exec elders than exec elders for leadership, accountability and perspective and a non-paid elder to alleviate conflict of interest issues

### **Executive Elder Voting Requirements**

The EE voting requirement was set at unanimous approval, this has been modified to a 2/3 approval which protects the church from one guy being able to single handedly control the EE team.

### **Calling Special Meetings**

The state statute allows us to adjust the percentages of "members" who can call a special meeting from the default of 5% but doesn't say we can prohibit the members from calling a meeting. If we remove that right of the members then there is a chance the courts would use the default of 5% which could put all of the elders at the mercy of a small handful of men. The percentage requirement has been changed to 50% of the members to call a meeting. The state didn't allow us to make the change we wanted to so we'll have to go with this which does allow the 50% of all the elders to call a meeting if the Board is way out of line.

### **Remaining Process**

- September 17th
  - Second Revised Draft sent to All Elders
- September 17th – September 26th
  - Second Open Comment Period
- September 28th
  - Final Revised Draft complete and sent to All Elders (this final represents the document to be voted on)
- October 29th
  - Elders Meeting – Vote on Final Draft (3/4 approval required)

I need all of your final comments on or before September 26<sup>th</sup> if you would like them to be considered in the final draft of the bylaws. The final draft that goes out on September 28<sup>th</sup> will be the document we vote on at the elders meeting on October 29<sup>th</sup>. You will also have on September 28<sup>th</sup> the resolution and board nominations to adopt the new bylaws and vote on the proposed new board.

**Jamie Munson**  
**Lead Pastor**

Mars Hill Church  
1401 NW Leary Way  
Seattle, WA 98107

O: 206.706.6641

F: 206.706.6792

E: [jamie@marshillchurch.org](mailto:jamie@marshillchurch.org)

W: marshillchurch.org



**This was an email to Bill Clem related to the second Bylaw revision.**

On 9/18/07 3:25 PM, "Pastor Bent Meyer" <bent@marshallchurch.org> wrote:

The second bylaw revisions are meaningful, but not extensive. They don't give up much ground to the Council of Elders, who are not just members as though the elders were the church. There is real fear represented in Mark and Jamie's language related to the elders. I do agree, no single elder should be given such power to hold the church hostage, so the ground given so far is good while safeguards against obstructionism is also good.

The history of Mars Hill to date has not had the elder's exhibit drag out fights over virtually anything. So, the speculation is historically unfounded. However, when the what-if scenarios are run protecting exclusivity of the vision casters authority the concerns are founded. If the future elders are not selected well and given clear vision and liberty to carry out their calling, there could be a hostage or obstructionist player.

I have not yet, released my concerns to Jamie or any of the other executive elders in any form other than verbal. Being that I have missed the first feedback milestone, I feel like I am missing my opportunity to be taken seriously. I have feedback for Mike, which I value. His comments have changed my perspective in some ways. I would like yours to round it off. If it would be helpful to you to meet for lunch like Thursday, I would welcome it. I don't want the weekend to pass without voicing my concerns in writing.

Thanks  
Bent

**From:** Pastor Bill Clem  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 18, 2007 7:53 PM  
**To:** Pastor Bent Meyer  
**Subject:** Re: Bylaw revisions

Bent  
I have a meeting until 1 p.m. On Thurs, can you go then?  
I would welcome the meeting  
Bill

**From:** Pastor Jamie Munson  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 26, 2007 9:42 AM  
**To:** Elders  
**Cc:** Tim Beltz  
**Subject:** Bylaws: Final Comments Deadline

Elders – Per my previous email (copied below) today is the deadline for final comments on the bylaws, if you plan to make any I need them by the end of the day.

Thanks,  
Jamie

**Jamie Munson**  
*Lead Pastor*

**Mars Hill Church**  
1401 NW Leary Way, Seattle, WA 98107  
o: 206.816.3773  
e: [jamie@marshillchurch.org](mailto:jamie@marshillchurch.org)  
w: [www.marshillchurch.org](http://www.marshillchurch.org)

To: Jamie Munson

From: Bent Meyer

9/26/2007

Subject: **Concerns and potential language to amend portions of the proposed bylaws.**

Consideration of the Bylaw proposal, and revisions have been markedly colored by the behavior and attitudes of some, who will comprise the future board of directors. I would not be honest to withhold that. It has cast a dark lens on the absolute power shift being proposed. The trust being appealed for is validated or invalidated by those that make the appeal for it. Trust is not constructed of words or organizational accomplishments. It is and isn't communications. It is foremost, the communication of authentic godly controlled, measured displays of character and power. Is there any technical sin here? Nothing that one can get close enough to see and verify, but the smell of dead bodies is in the air.

I anticipate, by past experience, what I have said, to be turned around into an accusation that I am not discerning, off mission, sinning, untrustworthy, disloyal, treasonous or making accusations without foundation. I have no proof of anything, but the exec elders need to look at the mirror I am holding up. That is the reason, from the first, I have harped on accountability. It is also the reason I have run the dark scenarios to test how the proposal could be misused with little consequence.

I have relented of the darkest scenarios, since I am persuaded the grave would already be dug if some of them came to life.

I do agree, going forward, a Board of Director's is practical and sensible. That is not my concern.

I also agree, the Board must have powers and flexibility to act decisively and expeditiously.

What I am unwilling to accept is the stark authoritarian powers to create the law, enforce law, and execute anyone without consequence or appeal. Consequentially to correct something that could be relatively simple requires a monumental vote and possible removal of an executive elder or elected elder or for that matter the whole group. This is a reflection of how out of balance this is. Thus I am proposing an appeals process that still keeps authority in the hands of the Directors. (See below)

I understand the Board of Director's are being presented as balanced, but I think it can be circumvented with some engineering with crucial votes being taken during that imbalance. (More detail later).

I understand the appeal is toward an influence system by the surrounding elders and deacons, through a flow of advice, ideas, creative thinking and information gathering. That is good to the ears. However, bristling over the word "representative" colors what influence means. I understand, those on the board are not proxy representatives, but rather vote their own mind.

Representation doesn't equal proxy responsibility in any legal fashion. What is implied by the hyperventilating is that those who are on the Board operate without regard for those that elected them. I don't think that is what you want to communicate. But, it does created the questions: will there really be an open hearing of both positive and negative content and views, without fear of being harshly silenced or, impatiently dismissed? Will views and concerns make it to the Board? Will they be credibly considered along the way? Time will tell, since the proof in the actions of the one responsible.

Jamie, you were asked at the first presentation meeting if the proposal was negotiable. Your reply was heard in words like, "No, it isn't." This, of course, means, from the start, I and others have to accept it without too much fuss. To significantly disagree is treasonous, a sign of present and future disunity, a prelude to suspicions that this person will start and lead a faction, or leaving the organization either voluntarily or by force. As a matter of fact, that proposition was presented to me during this deliberation period, (not the forced part that is my speculation. I have been in the presence of that kind of talk related to others before. I know the spirit and pressure behind it.)

I have thought much about this and I am reminded that God has called me to be an elder. I can't quit responsibly. I am accountable to Him for my niche, the church as a whole and the people that cross my path and come under my influence. The calling has been in spoken form on two occasions. I never speak of this, since the only real value it has is to keep me in the misery and mess until I am incapacitated or die. I, however, think you need to know it at this time. For me, serving at Mars Hill Church is not something I can run away from. I can be dismissed, which is out side my power to control. But, I can't quit. It is incumbent on me to have authority based on character, as well as office. I hope it is known as trustworthy. Claiming a verbal call, which I could, without character is empty and deserving of my removal.

I think I need to reiterate this again, as I have repeatedly to you and others during this time of consideration. When this or a version of this is approved, it will be one part of the trinity of documents (Bylaws, Statement of Faith, and daily operating procedures) that comprise the constitution and operating law of Mars Hill Church. Rom 13 would have me be compliant and wholeheartedly operating under its provision, which I will. My concerns will have been spoken. I will have voted with integrity and I will be at peace with how we operate going forward. That is my commitment to all the elders.

Since, we are operating under the current Bylaws, which make it incumbent on me to take positions and live with the ramifications, I will declare three points that are non-negotiable for me to vote "Yes". (See below). Believe me, this is not some martyr wish. I have far more to accomplish in the years ahead to want to fall on my sword in the coming days or months.

On this point of experiencing oppositions, I would trust that if for some reason, the vote would go against the proposal, the elders proposing the bylaw changes would not resign, quit, have bad attitudes, expect retaliation, or fight the vote covertly. What they would do is make another run at it with something more agreeable. This is the operation of the elders at the moment, which I appreciate. However it will not be an option for the elders that give up authority in the future. So this is a big deal.

As I told you in my first email, I have exercised the option of calling Nat Taylor to clarify the language and correct my reading where it is mistaken. He and I had an understanding from the beginning that he is not in the middle of anything, nor that I wanted advice from him. I wanted to understand the breadth of the language in the proposal. He has faithfully kept his station to represent Mars Hill in a neutral way. He is a good man.

As you read the following, I am still open to further conversation and persuasion, but I am announcing a hard stand based on what I understand at present, because it is the last opportunity to do so.

To the Bylaws:

1. **Appeals Process:** Somewhere there needs to be an appeals process for judgments against a person that are questionable, ill informed or unbiblical. It must be done outside the body that executed the questionable judgment. This could be done by calling a task force, appointed by the Board of Directors with Counsel of Elders approval, or it could be created by the Counsel of Elders with the Board of Directors approval.
  - a. The task force would examine all the facts fairly read, heard, and weighed.
  - b. The task force would present a recommendation to the Counsel of Elder and Board of Director's, with confidential transcripts of evidence and discussion, as a read only document, not to be copied, but available on request by any elder to be read in the secretary of the Board of Director's office. (This would increase the sense of accountability and trust to an overwhelming measure.)
  - c. Reinstatement, reversal of judgment or holding the course would be placed back in the hands of the Board of Directors.
  - d. It would not assure re-employment, since employment is based on organizational need and employee to job fit and fitness. In other words, if a job disappears or is found redundant, which leads to a reassignment or elimination of employment, there would be no appeal. An appeal would only be triggered if credible evidence is presented that a biblical, bylaw or operational violation was traversed by the judgment.
  - e. A task force would be initiated by the 3 members of the Board of Director's or 10 members of the Counsel of Elders. This voting minimum would trump Article IV, Section C, since it is unlikely there would ever be a group that represents 50% of the elders to call a meeting for anything. This will become truer as the church takes root in far flung places.
2. **Article IV, Section A:** Bylaw changes should be infrequent at best. Because they are as significant as Elected Elder/Director representation and changes to the Mars Hill Doctrinal statement it must be approved by the Counsel of Elders. This one is nearly a non-negotiable addition to receive a "Yes" vote from me.
3. **Article IV, Section C:** Any exercise of this option would probably be the last throws of a church split and would be legally meaningless.
  - a. For elders to call a meeting for any purpose associated with authority they don't have is meaningless unless it is to removed directors on the Board of Directors, a violation of the Doctrinal Statement, or revolt with not legal right to do so.
  - b. Any movement this direction would be quelled before it achieved momentum. It would be looked at as divisive.
  - c. The percentage should be lower. It must be achievable, yet hard to come up with, unless there is a catastrophe.

d.

4. **Article V, Section B:** This one is a non-negotiable for me to achieve a “Yes” vote. “In the event of a vacancy on the Board of Directors, the remaining directors, even if less than a quorum, may by majority vote elect a successor for each vacancy to fill the unexpired term.”
- a. Absolutely not!
  - b. The elected board members are just that, “elected” from the Counsel of Elders, by the counsel of elders.
  - c. This provision opens the door for wrongful dismissal to achieve engineered results.
  - d. The provision implants in the structure of the Board a lever of intimidation to comply, rather than to be objectivity and independence to consider and vote.
  - e. I would agree if one of three alternate suggestion be adopted:
    1. Two or three reserve Board Candidates are pre-selected to replace board members that retire, die, resign, or are removed from the board at the time the official board members are elected.or
    2. Interim members are elected by the Board for a temporary assignment of no more than 1 month to provide for a meeting of the Counsel of Elders to be convened for the purpose of ratifying the selection or electing a different member/s.
    3. or
    4. Replacement of a board member who retires, dies, resigns, or is removed from the board’s jurisdiction reverts back to the Counsel of Elders for the purpose of electing a replacement.
    5. The ultimate selection must be by the Counsel of Elders.
5. **Article V, Section C:** “The number of elected director/Elders shall always be at least one more than the number of Executive Director/Elders.”
- a. The previous provision to assure a quick manning to filling a vacant seat on the Board should accommodate the addition of the following wording: “No legal vote can be taken without this ratio existing, with the exception of a vote to restore the ratio in the manner provided in Article V, Section B.”
  - b. At this moment this one is non-negotiable toward a “Yes” vote from me.
6. **Article VI Section F:** My read of this provision could trump Article V, Section J, making a simple majority of the board meaningless if the executive elder team chooses to veto. The provision makes the Board of Director vote nothing more then advisory or a powerless opinion at best. I would like to have clarifying language stating “For an issue delegated to the executive elder team to meet approval of a vote by this team must be unanimous (abstention permitted).”

I have done no lobbying or attempted to count votes, nor have I attempted to persuade anyone to adopt my concerns. I have sought pushback and a check on my concerns to validate or invalidate my statements. So Jamie and who else might read this email, I am responsible for my words and positions alone.

I hope you take this in the spirit I intend.



From: Pastor Jamie Munson

Sent: Saturday, **September 29, 2007** 6:24 PM

To: Elders

Cc: Chad Toulouse; Tim Beltz

Subject: Bylaws FINAL Draft - Oct. 29 Elders Meeting

Attachments: Bylaw questions from Elders.doc; 09-29-07 - Mars Hill Church Bylaws -FINAL Revised Draft.doc

Dear Elders –

We have arrived at a final draft of the bylaws. This is an important document for us as a church and we've done a good job at building a structure that is faithful to scripture and will allow us to lead the church well into the future for Jesus' glory. The attached bylaws will be voted on during the October 29th elders meeting which gives us more than 30 days advance notice - meeting our current bylaw requirement. Every comment submitted was read and considered and in an effort to be transparent I have attached for you a document that summarizes almost all of the comments and their corresponding answers. The majority of the comments formally and informally I've received have been confirming, wise, helpful and encouraging with a few exceptions where there is still unhealthy distrust and resistance to change. Personal commentaries and opinions have been excluded from the summary not for purposes of censure but due to their relevance and the path that we need to take for the best interest of the whole church. Thank you for participating in this process.

The formal resolution(s) and technical timing for the votes are still being drafted by our attorney but in order to adopt these changes the following actions will need to take place at our October 29th elders meeting:

1. Approve the new Bylaws (3/4 approval required)
2. Resignation of existing directors who will not remain on the BOD (The resignation has no effect on elder or employment status)
3. Election of the proposed slate of new directors (2/3 approval required for each man)
4. Approve new elders (Unanimous approval required)
5. Newly formed BOD meets to confirm Executive Elders

The slate of nominees for the Board has been developed and will be shared shortly. The executive elders are speaking with the men now and are looking for their personal acceptance of the nomination first. Once we have received those this week the slate will be sent to all of the elders.

We've reshaped Mars Hill for the better and I look forward to continuing to work with you all as we lead Jesus' mission.

Blessings,

Pastor Jamie

Jamie Munson

Lead Pastor

Mars Hill Church

1401 NW Leary Way, Seattle, WA 98107

o: 206.816.3773

e: [jamie@marshillchurch.org](mailto:jamie@marshillchurch.org) <<mailto:jamie@marshillchurch.org>>

w: [www.marshillchurch.org](http://www.marshillchurch.org) <<http://www.marshillchurch.org/>>

## Termination meeting notice

*There was no one-on-one discipline discussion or for that matter any two-on-one warning before this next meeting. Paul Petry received the same email calling us to a "mandatory" meeting in which would be "terminated." Yes, that is the language.*

**From:** Pastor Jamie Munson  
**Sent:** Sunday, September 30, 2007 5:37 PM  
**To:** Pastor Bent Meyer  
**Subject:** meeting tonight  
**Importance:** High

Bent – I need you to join me for a meeting tonight at 8:15 in Bill Clem's office. It's mandatory so please confirm you have received this, I'll try and catch you in person if you don't read this.

Jamie

**Jamie Munson**  
*Lead Pastor*

**Mars Hill Church**  
1401 NW Leary Way, Seattle, WA 98107  
o: 206.816.3773  
e: [jamie@marshillchurch.org](mailto:jamie@marshillchurch.org)  
w: [www.marshillchurch.org](http://www.marshillchurch.org)

*Please note the time the email was sent and the time of the meeting. This will be important later related to Mark's sermon that day and the 142-page document informing the members that there was careful consideration given to how this would be done.*

*The termination language comes from the transcript notes I wrote shortly after I arrived at home.*

*Paul and I arrived and found places to sit. Bubby Jenings was in the room as was Steve Tomkins. Scott Thomas arrived and we engaged in a short bit of conversation. Then Mark and Jamie entered.*

*Jamie looked at both of us and said briskly. "Your employment at Mars Hill Church is terminated immediately."*

*Then Mark took the baton and said, "Your performance is abysmal. I am disappointed in you both. You have one of two choices; you can resign quietly or go to trial before the elders and the church. There are files and they are thick and getting thicker. What is your decision?"*

*I said I would take option 2. (It is beyond me that they would think I would resign quietly, based on what I had already communicated to Jamie in my previous email).*

*Paul also chose that option.*

*Mark, "Alright, there will be a painful investigation. I don't want to hear anything else. This meeting is terminated."*

*I replied "OK" and walked out of the room. Jamie told me to turn in my computer and keys to Amy Lockman when I leave the building.*

*No charges were given only the threat that some files existed.*

*I don't possess this email, but it has been reported to me that the elders and staff were asked to report anything to the investigating team that would demonstrate wrongdoing.*

*This would become very important later, because the investigating team will find that all the charges against me were "found to be not credible" Scott Thomas quote, except the charge that I did not trust senior leadership.*

*The charges "found to be not credible" will be spoken by Scott Thomas on two occasions. The first was during the investigation interview I attended. The second would be at the beginning of my trial before the elders. In both instances, the only charge that was on the table was not trusting senior leadership. Both declarations were in place before the 142-page document to the members was published.*

*It will also be very important to compare this with the language Mark used against me at our last meeting held on 2/14/2008. It is the last document in this notebook.*

*The document that follows announces to the elders the termination of Paul and me. I received a letter from Jamie Munson outlining charges against me that then are changed in subsequent days and later to be found "not credible". Bearing falls witness is by itself reason for dismissal. You will see this repeated many times going forward.*

*It is also noteworthy, that I made two phone calls after the meeting. The first to Joanne telling her I had been fired and the second to Mile Wilkerson. Mike was my direct supervisor. When I told him what had happened, he was completely surprised. He said he was shocked, sorry and knew nothing about it.*

*I followed up with Phil Smidt and Jen Latvala the next day to cancel the appointed meetings with Counseling clients. Phil needed to know I was schedule to perform a wedding the following weekend, which I didn't think I could do under the circumstances. He would have to substitute someone else to do it.*

*I also called Kerry Michaelis to give him warning that he and Nancy Schmidt would have to contact Mike Wilkerson soon, to coordinate Grace Groups in Joanne and my absence.*

*In none of these instances was thought or preparation for a transition thought about or provided for. All the people I coordinated and appointments set up were left adrift at sea. This was completely irresponsible and reflected the impulsive nature of the action.*




October 1, 2007

Dear Bent,

As we discussed, your employment as a pastor with Mars Hill Church has been terminated effective October 1, 2007. Although you were employed at-will and could be terminated without cause, the reasons for your termination include ongoing division with other elders regarding church governance, disrespecting spiritual authority, not demonstrating sound judgment regarding Grace Groups and not being on board with the mission and direction of the church.

In lieu of resignation as an elder you have elected to go through the process outlined in the Mars Hill bylaws regarding an investigation into your status as an elder and potential removal. This is independent of your employment status. A task force headed by Pastor Scott Thomas is conducting the investigation. He will contact you regarding your opportunity to discuss your eldership status with the task force.

Sincerely,



Jamie Munson  
Lead Elder

MHC | ballard campus  
1501 no. leary way  
seattle, wa 98107

MHC | shoreline campus  
n 135th st s  
greenwood ave n  
shorline, wa 98133

MHC | west seattle campus  
7251 25th ave. sw  
seattle, wa 98126

MHC | wedgwood campus  
office and dining  
3524 no 90th st  
seattle, wa 98116



October 1, 2007

Dear Bent:

We are very sad to see you go as an employee of Mars Hill Church. While I can imagine this is a painful and confusing time, there are several logistics I need to cover with you.

You will receive a salary through the end of the calendar year and your last paycheck will be on December 31, 2007. Mars Hill Church will continue to pay your benefits until December 31, 2007.

For your 403b, American Funds states the following:

*When you leave your job or join a firm that isn't qualified to offer a 403b plan, you can:*

- leave the assets untouched in your current account,*
- transfer your 403b assets into a traditional Individual Retirement Account (IRA),*
- transfer your 403b assets into an individual retirement annuity, a governmental 457b plan or a qualified plan that accepts rollovers like a 401k,*
- or*
- take periodic withdrawals or withdraw all the money from your account in one lump sum.*

Please follow up with American Funds regarding your account. Mars Hill Church will stop its contribution on September 30, 2007.

Please return your keys, laptop, and name badge to me or Jen by Sunday, October 7, 2007. Your office will need to be cleaned out by this date as well.

You may provide any feedback regarding your employment and/or the termination process by emailing me at [amy@marshillchurch.org](mailto:amy@marshillchurch.org).

Thank you for your service, giving of your gifts and time at Mars Hill Church as an employee. You are respected and will be missed by many.

Sincerely,

Amy Lockman  
HR Department

MHC | **ballard campus**  
1401 nw leary way  
seattle, wa 98107

MHC | **shoreline campus**  
n 19529 st &  
greenwood ave. n  
shoreline, wa 98133

MHC | **west seattle campus**  
7551 35th ave. sw  
seattle, wa 98126

MHC | **wedgwood campus**  
**office and billing**  
3524 ne 95th st.  
seattle, wa 98115

## Events Following Termination

*This chapter comprises documents related to the investigation performed by Gary Shavey, Dave Kraft, and Steve Tomkins lead by Scott Thomas.*

*Scott Thomas is an interesting figure in what follows. He was one of the executive elders. He voted to fire Paul and me. He led the investigation and later the trial before the elders. You will also remember he told Paul and me to consider resigning if we didn't participate in selling the bylaw proposal to the younger elders.*

*I informed Scott what my upcoming calendar obligations were. I would be in Michigan leading at SALTS for ten days. This is important, since it prevented my trial from happening when the executive elders first intended. However, it didn't prevent them from proceeding with Paul's trial.*

*While I was gone, an increasing uproar was being heard from the members. It was not enough to prevent reconsideration of Paul's case, but I think it did influence mine.*

*Being in Michigan was a blessing. I could turn off my phone and just not logon to look at email. I had good and wise conversations, which helped put my situation in perspective and I could look at what I would do in the upcoming weeks that would create the possibility of a reset for Joanne and me.*

*I decided I would put together all the correspondence I had available, plus a cover letter disclosing what I could remember of my conduct since being fired that I would distribute to the elders.*

From Bent Meyer <bent.meyer@gmail.com>

To amy@marshallchurch.org,

Cc scott@marshallchurch.org,

Date Tue, Oct 9, 2007 at 10:10 AM

Subject Registered Letter

No, I don't have the registered letter.

We have been out of town to get away from the phone. People have our home phone, not my cell number. It is too hard to repeatedly tell person after person to trust the elders and let the process work its way out. So, we packed our bags and went across the water to our daughters.

I have a meeting tomorrow at Wedgwood with the investigating team.

Regarding the items you are inquiring about:

1. I turned in my keys to you Oct. 1 at about 8:20 PM as per my instructions.
2. I still have the name badge. I will surrender it tomorrow to Scott Thomas.
3. I dropped off my laptop on our way out of town, last Friday, with Mike Wilkerson. He agreed to delivery it Sunday.
4. Thanks for the reminder about the file drawer keys. Yes, I do have them and I will surrender them tomorrow to Scott Thomas.

Since, I didn't pack up my office, there might and probably will be items I will be returning. I don't really want to wade through them at this time.

Thank you for your assistance in this process.

Let those that might ask, know we are doing well. There are no depressive symptoms and no resentment. As a matter fact. Monday morning I started the next Biblical text, Revelation, in my reading. I read the letter to Philadelphia and wept. I don't jump on text to claim, but this spoke too much to our future. God has moved us on to accomplish regionally something that probably could not happen at MHC. We are walking through the door optimistically. When close to 25%+ of the population of Seattle are struggling survivor's of abuses, that's a staggering number to engage, image Christ before, and possibility win to the kingdom as men and women that act not out of their victimization, but out of strength to overcome evil with good as they model Jesus. To raise up and train men and women to address this sector is big and possible, even as late in life as we are to start it.

I do regret not having more interaction with you over the years, but the little I had was life giving. Thank you.

Bent



From: Bent Meyer

To: Scott Thomas  
Gary Shavey  
Dave Kraft  
Steve Tompkins

Date: 10/10/2007

Subject: Elder qualification investigation of Bent Meyer.

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns and your productive feedback to my communications related to the Mars Hill Church bylaws discussion.

I gratefully accept the criticism of my choice of words and metaphor seen from your vantage point. I am solely responsible for the use of those words and accept the consequence of their use. My intention was to be heard, which proved to be true, but not precisely the way I intended. I wanted to dramatize the way the last 6 months of administration has been perceived by me. I don't know precisely what others thinking might be, but if it is anything like mine, there is an unspoken current of concern, and yes, even suspicion that something is not right and important matters are being hidden. I hope our discussion clarified the difference between accusation and perception.

I will repeat, I don't know if there is or isn't, but the mirror I was holding, was intended to dramatically draw attention to false assurance that all is okay with the troops. It might not be.

I especially appreciate our wrestling with the issue of trust. Scott you spoke very well to how I view trust and I appreciate the clarity of your words.

Steve, I am glad you understood and accepted my affirmative answer to your question regarding, if I can and will trust the elders that serve on the Board of Director's? The men I have served with are honorable, up right, godly men that I respect and trust within the bounds that I can trust any godly man. As you said, there will be times these men would make a wrong decision, they would also correct when insight emerges. I trust that is true.

Jamie, I especially want to acknowledge my lack of consideration toward you. Repentance is of little consequence if it is just words; my pledge to you is that I will never dramatize with words that would inflame again.

Lastly, I acknowledge having talked with Scott Golike some days after my termination. Though I talk with Scott infrequently, he is an outside source for me to do an attitude check. This was one of those times.

Respectfully,

Bent Meyer

## Telephone conversation and follow up email with Lief Moi

*This related to a telephone conversation I had with Lief Moi. He read me an email that either was intended to be emailed or already had been emailed to the elders, in which I was characterized as "in deep contrition and repentance." This implied the magnitude of what I had done was of grave consequence. I objected verbally to him after he read it and then in this follow-up email. I was yet to experience how consistently crafted media spin would be applied to me.*

*If the document still exists you will have to ask one of many of the elders if they will reveal it. If it was distributed, someone will have it on their machine.*

From Bent Meyer <bent.meyer@gmail.com>

To lief@marshallchurch.org,

Date Fri, Oct 12, 2007 at 8:44 PM

Subject Correspondence with Scott

mailed-bygmail.com

hide details 10/12/07 Reply

I just BCCed you with the only written statement I have provided Scott Thomas, since my investigation interview. You will see it has none of the verbiage you read to me. I did not ask for forgiveness. I acknowledge it was not useful for getting my point across, though I wonder if anything would work.

Before you go off to do something, if that is in your mind, call Gary, Steve and Dave to see if what they heard was anything like what Scott wrote.

Thank you for reading it to me. It would be a huge issue for me to return to Seattle as a reinstated elder and I would have to publicly refute that statement. That would create a bigger disaster than what is currently taking place.

Are they doing damage control? Somehow thinking if they could portray me as a contrite sinner that the blame would shift to me? I will be very angry if that happens. I will not be one of the elders with a broken nose. Did anyone think I would go 10 rows for a decision? No, they probably thought the nice guy would run away.

The confabulation is a far bigger issue than the storm I created. I am very disappointed. Now, I have a confirmed issue of trust.

To: The Council of Elders

From: Bent Meyer

Date: October 23, 2007

Subject: Open disclosure of my conduct and correspondence during the course of our deliberations concerning the '07 Bylaw re-write proposal.

Thank you, Scott of giving me permission to address the Council in this manner.

I prepared the documents for the investigating team in chronological order, thinking sequence was important, since there was a buildup of intensity, which was dialed up by events I experienced during the course of deliberation.

I have provided a timeline to help you remember your own experience, which might or might not correspond with my perception.

In this process, I have had two face to face meetings; one with Jamie and then with Scott and an additional sidebar conversation with Scott. There was a fourth sidebar meeting with Scott and AJ, primarily discussing my concerns related to Mike Wilkerson's disciplinary action. I provide them because they shape my perception and email push back.

The meeting with Scott and AJ primarily concerned itself with the way Mike was disciplined and the lack of information provided the elders. I was prepared to take the risk of pulling the nuclear clause from the current Bylaws to force a review of the charges against Mike. Scott reporting an investigation had taken place, but also admitted, he did not know the details. AJ forcefully told me that Mike was told by four elders not to do what he did, related to addressing Mark's anger. Based on this information I stopped and did not pull the trigger. (Understand, there is no provision in the proposed bylaws to force a review of anything, by the council of elders. What I am experiencing in the abrupt termination will be experienced again, but it will be you being terminated. No charges were given just that some files existed. "They were thick and getting thicker." "I don't want to hear anything else. This meeting is terminated" ended the meeting. The only thing I was allowed to say was my selection of one of two options; "resign quietly" or a full investigation of my conduct and character, which would be brought before the elders and the congregation. Is this the way you want to be terminated? The only reason I have any ability to even write this is because you have authority under the current Bylaws to force a review. The proposed Bylaws, strip you of holding anyone accountable, except for the elected men who can be removed. But, you would possibly be terminated before you got very far.)

Now back to the Scott and AJ conversation. I later discovered, AJ's information was incorrect. No one had told Mike to reconsider or not do what he did. I don't believe AJ was lying to me. He really believed what he said, but, he got incorrect information from someone and that leaves, what I believe a possible wrong un-reviewed.

I was also assured by AJ, that those he is in the inner circle with look with contempt on those that have no backbone to speak up. They want elders that wrestle through and vote their conscience. But, he was concerned that I might be manipulated by others to be a martyr. Was I falling on my sword needlessly? I assured them I was speaking and acting out of my own concern, not others, since I didn't know what others were thinking. I just knew it didn't look right and I was willing to take the risk.

My face to face meeting with Jamie followed my first emailed concerns about the bylaw re-write. We discussed my concerns related to the bylaws being a set up for wrong doing by someone that would follow Mark. He assured me there was no need to be concerned, since there was a five million dollar insurance policy on Mark, in case of his death. That sounds reassuring, except I have heard Mark contemplate taking offers by other churches for far more money and less hassle. There is no insurance coverage for that scenario. The church would experience a precipitous drop in population and funds. The elders and particularly the man that replaces Mark would be under enormous pressure to do whatever to turn the ship around. The proposed bylaws would leave all sorts of gates open for mischief.

What is important to note. I told Jamie in my email I would seek legal counsel related to the Bylaws. I also said I would expect conversation and debating with other elders and possibly groups of elders. Jamie said nothing to stop me from proceeding. Understand I have talked with Nathaniel Taylor many times concerning counseling issues, so we would never be sued for malpractice. I was assured that being an elder of MHC, I was a legal representative of MHC, which is true. Do you know you are legally entitled to talk to Nat for the good of MHC? The proposed Bylaws strip you of this.

Jamie and I ended the meeting with pleasantries.

My first face to face meeting with Scott was at a park, not far from MHC. I was taking my lunch break and Paul Petry called me and joined me to talk about a case he was having concerns about. During our conversation, Scott called and joined us.

He sat down with some small talk and then looking at both of us said, you are both senior, respected members of the elders. It is your responsibility to talk these younger men into accepting the proposed bylaws, otherwise, consider resigning.

Well, gentlemen, that set the tone for how I experienced the remainder of the Bylaw deliberation. I could be intimidated, pack up my concerns and conscience and roll over to rubber stamp a legal irrevocable shift in power. I couldn't do that for you or myself.

The next twenty minutes or so, I addressed my concerns with Scott. He had not thought of some of the concerns and solutions I presented. He appeared to be accommodating, taking notes and saying much of my concern was valid and could be incorporated.

As you will see by examining my emailed concerns, nothing has been incorporated - only dismissed.

My second conversation was one of those, "Oh, do you have a moment?", meetings. We stood in the door way of the office I occupied. I repeated many of my concerns, which again, Scott seemed to be open to consider.

One other conversation, I don't remember the time to place it in sequence, Scott argued with me when I told him I intended to talk with other elders to discover their concerns. He instructed me to only talk with my supervisor. I pointed out that Mike was not in a good place to engage me, but I would go to Bill Clem. I complied with this, though I disagreed with the notion of being isolated from the rest of you.

I did discover that some elders were willing to vote "yes" without having read the current Bylaws compared to the proposal. I told them to read it carefully. If this is a violation then I am guilty.

After my termination, I called Joanne to tell her what happened.

I then called Mike to inform him what happened. He was shocked and grieved.

The next morning I talked to Nancy Schmit to inform her that I had been terminated. She needed to know, since Grace Groups were scheduled for Tuesday evening and Joanne and I were supervising leaders by sitting in groups to evaluate performance. The change in procedure was going to be a big deal. I then told her to look to Mike for ongoing direction concerning Grace Groups.

I called Phil to find someone to officiate a wedding I was to do the following weekend.

For the next few days Joanne and I were called repeatedly asking for information to understand what was happening. Since, I didn't know what the charges were, I told them it was related to the Bylaw debate the elders were struggling through. I also told them to trust the elders and the process. To this day I believe it is, since I would prevent a unanimously affirmative vote.

Joanne and I then left town to get away from the phone, which worked. Other than a few days in town preparing to go to Michigan and be interviewed, I have been intentionally out of touch.

The most telling sequence is this: I sent the email telling Jamie I would not vote "Yes" the evening of the 26th. I told him my position was non-negotiable with what I knew at the time. Now that was Wednesday, Sunday I was terminated. No thought was given to start canceling appointments or even to inform Mike to

prepare for the transition that would follow. The termination was impulsive and ethically wrong for those receiving counseling.

You need to know, if I still had voting rights, I would vote "No." You also need to know that I am not opposed to a Board of Directors as long as there are appropriate accountability mechanisms in place before the council of elders surrenders any more of their current responsibilities. I know, the documents that follow are cumbersome, but read them for yourself and for your sake.

Any future employment at MHC is sealed as irrevocable. My eldership is likewise sealed, because the issues before you now are so momentous and the pressure on you to vote "yes" is huge.

***What you have just read was assumed to been given to all the elders before they voted to adopt the proposed bylaws. If it did it made no difference. If however, it was withheld, it would again expose the consistent manipulation and control of communication. It would again demonstrate the control of the message by silencing any other voice than Marks.***

From Bent Meyer <bent.meyer@gmail.com>

To staffelders@marshallchurch.org,  
tim.quiring@marshallchurch.org,  
timr@marshallchurch.org,  
james.dahlman@marshallchurch.org,

date Oct 24, 2007 1:36 PM

subject Material presented at Bent Meyer's investigation meeting on 10/11/2007  
mailed-bygmail.com

hide details 10/24/07 Reply

I asked Scott Thomas if I could provide each of you copies (paper or electronic) of the packet of material given to the four investigating elders. He gave me permission to send an electronic set to each of you. For those of you on the investigative team, note I removed the redundant repetition, where the original message is attached to the reply. Other than that the set should be identical to what you received at the meeting.

In anticipation of discussion and questions you might have, I have provided a timeline representing my memory of the events leading up to and following my termination. I have also included an account of verbal conversation I had with various people during this time. This last bit was not provided to the investigating team, since it did not come to mind until after the investigation, but in the spirit of full disclosure I present it to you.

Thank you for your consideration.

Bent

## Scott Thomas response

10/11/2007 Scott Thomas responded to the above requested response to the investigating task force. I will not copy it, since I will honor his confidentiality clause on the bottom of his emails. "This information is confidential and privileged information intended only for the recipient. Please do not copy, forward or disseminate it in any form. Do not read this unless you are the recipient. If this is sent to you errantly, please destroy and contact **Scott Thomas** at (206) 816-3608."

### I will paraphrase:

Scott was concerned that the response did not "reflect a repentant attitude" experienced by the investigating task force the previous day.

My response to the language is as follows:

I gratefully accept the criticism of my choice of words and metaphor seen from your vantage point.

"I am sorry that the words and metaphor I used was "too loud". It was intended to reflect perception of style that was being experienced over the course of our recent meetings. It is obvious I wasn't understood, but rather became an enemy. I am solely responsible for the use of those words and accept the consequence of their use. My intention was to be heard, which proved to be true, but not precisely the way I intended. I used the words as a vehicle to reflect what I see as harmful to achieve the very thing we all want. Yes, as a tactic to get attention, it obviously didn't work. I wanted to dramatize the way the last 6 months of administration has been perceived by me. I don't know precisely what others thinking might be, but if it is anything like mine. I am not trying to solicit support in that paragraph, since none of the other elders would have seen it. It was intended for those who are in control. My strong hunch is that I am not the only one perceiving what has happened as I do. I think others are intimidated to speak up. I wish they would. There is an unspoken current of concern, and yes, even suspicion that something is not right and important matters are being hidden. The implication your statement makes is that I have to be silent about my observations and concerns. I think I would be doing you and others a disservice by being silent. I said that going forward, I would not be silent, nor would I rubber stamp decisions. In my way of thinking it is much better to have conversation, debate and feedback than silent. I hope our discussion clarified the difference between accusation and perception."

The paragraph in question has sidetracked the main debate related to the bylaws. I still intend on voting "no" if my eldership remains in place. The issues that concern me have still not been addressed, but rather put off to a time when the council of elders has no power to affect the result. As I said in my last email to Jamie, this is a big deal.

Your characterization that the bylaws are a dynamic document, is true from your perspective, but not from the point of view of this member of the council of elders. By voting "yes", to the

proposed bylaws, strips rights from the council that are irrevocable. Going forward there would be no turning back. That is a big deal. It is unfortunate that some think this concern reflects a lack of trust. It doesn't. It is structural, a primary governance concern.

I will repeat, I don't know if there is or isn't, but the mirror I was holding, was intended to dramatically draw attention to false assurance that all is okay with the troops. It might not be. As you acknowledge, there are levels of trust, primarily, because none of us are infallible. As I stated to Steve. I trust the elders that will be part of the Board of Directors. Steve, for instance, is a upright man, who has given me no reason, to date, not to trust him. He is open and forthright. His words and actions match. Leadership that operated in this fashion is trustworthy. I believe, I could talk to Steve as a board member, and I would be seriously heard.

Other than being given meeting information and permission to send an electronic version of what I gave the investigation task force I have no further email contact with an Executive Elder.

I did have a brief conversation with Steve when Joanne and I attended Shoreline for worship.



From Bent Meyer <bent.meyer@gmail.com>  
To md@marshillchurch.org,  
pastorsteve@marshillchurch.org,  
adam@marshillchurch.org,  
aj@marshillchurch.org,  
bill@marshillchurch.org,  
pastor.brad@marshillchurch.org,  
brad@marshillchurch.org,  
bubba@marshillchurch.org,  
dave@marshillchurch.org,  
dick@marshillchurch.org,  
gary@marshillchurch.org,  
gary@theresurgence.com,  
james@marshillchurch.org,  
jamesn@marshillchurch.org,  
jm@marshillchurch.org,  
jamie@marshillchurch.org,  
jessew@marshillchurch.org,  
lief@marshillchurch.org,  
Mike@marshillchurch.org,  
phil@marshillchurch.org,  
scott@marshillchurch.org,  
steve@marshillchurch.org,  
ts@marshillchurch.org,  
zack@marshillchurch.org,

date Thu, Oct 25, 2007 at 9:36 PM

subject Material presented at Bent Meyer's investigation meeting on 10/11/2007

mailed-bygmail.com

hide details 10/25/07 Reply

I asked Scott Thomas if I could provide each of you copies (paper or electronic) of the packet of material given to the four investigating elders. He gave me permission and instructed me to send an electronic set to each of you.

I have tried to send it to e@marshillchurch.org and staffelders@marshillchurch.org. Both addresses are either decommissioned or blocked. Would one of you ping me when you receive this. I don't want to go to Kinko's and hand deliver copies to everyone. If you notice some elders I might have missed, would you forward the email to them.

In anticipation of discussion and questions you might have, I have provided a timeline representing my memory of the events leading up to and following my termination. I have also included an account of verbal conversation I had with various people during this time. This last bit was not provided to the investigating team, since it did not come to mind until after the investigation, but in the spirit of full disclosure I present it to you.

Thank you for your consideration.

Bent Meyer

*The attachments are in this set of documents, but have been put in chronological order so you can track more easily the progression of correspondence and actions.*

## Scott Thomas response

From Pastor Scott Thomas <scott@acts29network.org>

To Bent Meyer <bent.meyer@gmail.com> ,

Date Fri, Oct 26, 2007 at 10:09 AM

Subject RE: Material presented at Bent Meyer's investigation meeting on 10/11/2007

hide details 10/26/07 Reply

Bent,

Summary: I had made the statement, "Any future employment at MHC is sealed as irrevocable. My eldership is likewise sealed, because the issues before you now are so momentous and the pressure on you to vote "yes" is huge."

Scott wanted to dissuade me from the closed nature of my statement. He spoke of the EIT being supportive of me. I would have to answer their questions during the trial, but my character was a witness of humility.

[REDACTED]

Thanks,

Scott

## *The Trial*

*Here is the scene I walked into. It took place in the Ballard building commons. This is a relatively square room that easily accommodates 40 chairs arranged in a circle in two rows. The inner row supported the current elders (my memory 26 at the time). The outer row supported the elder candidates.*

*I walked in, saw the set up and thought, "What are the elder candidates doing here? Oh ya, so they can be shown an example of what would happen to them if they think of getting out of line - fear!"*

*I was directed to a chair with Scott Thomas about 3 feet away. Scott was sitting, dominantly, on a bar stool. Mark was positioned directly across from me, in direct line of sight.*

*Scott asked if I had a statement. That was a curious statement, since what I had to say to the elders had already been disclose in my previous email. "No." was my reply. "Oh, I do have a question."*

*Scott nodded*

*Bent, "What is the status of the charges levied against me."*

*Scott, "**They were found to be not credible**, except the charge of not trusting serious leadership."*

*Bent, "Thank you." This declaration had been spoken during the investigative interview I had with the 4 person, I wanted all the elders to witness the statement. It was a risk, but well worth it.*

*Scott then opened up the venue for any of the elders to make a statement or ask a question.*

*Jamies Noriaga said, "Why can't you just trust Mark?"*

*Bent, "Look, I hold to the scriptural view that men are sinners and need to be accountable to many, not just a few."*

*This did not sit well with some, so I was asked again in a different ways, why I can't trust senior leadership. My answer was the same.*

*I looked at Mark across the room saying, "Mark there are times when you are brilliant, but other times where your decisions are awful. You need credible accountability."*

*Mark squirmed in his chair, smile foolishly and said nothing.*

*Seeing that I had no other statement to give and my answer was not changing, I was dismissed so the vote could be taken.*

*I left the building and received notice later that I was retained as an elder, but under suspension. I was to report to Steve Thomkin. His task was to persuade me to change my mind, which I couldn't. He tried hard to do it.*

*It is worth wondering why I didn't directly confront Mark with his illegal actions. My answer is first, I was fearful and second there was not direct line of provenance to Mark. We all knew nothing of this nature happens without Mark's direction and consent. I was hoping common experience would provide enough weight to stop the adoption of what was almost be become ratified.*

**This chapter relates to events that followed my trial before the elders.**

From Pastor Scott Thomas <scott@acts29network.org>

To Bent Meyer <bent.meyer@gmail.com> ,

Cc Steve Tompkins <st@marshillchurch.org> ,

Date Tue, Oct 30, 2007 at 1:47 PM

Subject Elder Findings

Pastor Bent,

Summary: Scott told me the charge of lack of trust and respect for senior leadership was voted by all the elders as guilty. My employment was retained for the time being. I was to report to Shoreline and Steve Tompkins to received conditions as he saw fit.

[REDACTED]

The elders did see that you lacked a trust and respect for the senior leadership. This charge was affirmed by a unanimous vote. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Shoreline elders to determine fit and need. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Thanks,

Scott

**James Harleman** motioned and **Bubba Jennings** seconded the following motion: "We find Bent Meyer guilty of the charge of displaying an unhealthy lack of trust in, and respect for, the senior leadership of Mars Hill Church." This was unanimously agreed.

**Steve Tompkins** and **James Noriega** seconded the following motion: "Based on Bent Meyer's repentance we recommend that he continue as an elder of Mars Hill Church on probation, with details and conditions to be overseen by the Shoreline campus elders." This was unanimously agreed.

**Bent Meyer 6/19/14 7:04 AM**  
**Comment:** I had no way of challenging this statement at the time, but men that were in that meeting have told me since, they had not voted this way.

**Bent Meyer 6/19/14 7:09 AM**  
**Comment:** This turned out to be dependent on me surrendering my distrust of Senior leadership. For me to do this would be to look the other way when grave actions would occur and say nothing. Steve tried repeatedly to persuade me to comply, which I could not do. I had already said I would operated within the structure the other elders agreed to, but that would not mean I would go silent.

From Pastor Scott Thomas <scott@acts29network.org>

To Bent Meyer <bent.meyer@gmail.com> ,

Date Tue, Oct 30, 2007 at 2:11 PM

Subject Members communication

Summary: Scott asked that I write a communications piece for the congregation.



Thanks,

Scott

This information is confidential and privileged information intended only for the recipient. Please do not copy, forward or disseminate it in any form. Do not read this unless you are the recipient. If this is sent to you errantly, please destroy and contact Scott Thomas at (206) 816-3608

***What follows is a crucial ambition. The governing Bylaws in place determined a process which involved the entire eldership to gather, examine and determine via evidence a matter such as employment, removal of another elder or any other matter that became questionable, like financial decisions. The propose Bylaw change would vaporized this crucial process.***

From: Pastor Jamie Munson

Sent: Tuesday, October 30, 2007 2:06 PM

To: Pastor Scott Thomas

Subject: bent

Update regarding Pastor Bent Meyer

On October 2nd, we informed the church members that Bent Meyer was being terminated from staff employment with Mars Hill Church. As a result, his eldership status was suspended pending a full investigation according to our bylaws and Scripture. Being a pastor on the payroll and a legal elder of the church are two distinct roles and are not mutually inclusive, thus requiring a separate process for each in regard to discipline and removal. The elders have completed the process and have made their ruling regarding Bent Meyer's fitness as an elder of Mars Hill Church.

According to our bylaws, Article III, Section E, when investigating charges brought against an elder, the elders must establish an Elder Investigation Taskforce (EIT) and during the investigation the elder in question must be put on temporary leave. A taskforce was assembled made up of four elders: Scott Thomas, Gary Shavey, Dave Kraft, and Steve Tompkins. These

**Bent Meyer 6/19/14 7:23 AM**

**Comment:** As you read the following. Jamie details the process mandated by the bylaws in place while Mike Wilkerson was suspended from his duties and his eldership at risk. This was what I was objecting to in his case. I was prepared to call for an elder review of Marks impulsive action.

**Bent Meyer 6/19/14 7:25 AM**

**Comment:** Notice the language. Being an elder is a legal standing, which also means having legal responsibility. Thus, it was responsible for me to seek legal understand of the bylaw proposal from the church lawyer.

Since it was true for me it was also true for Paul Petry. This is important as it related to the brutality inflicted on Paul and Jonna. Mark justified church excommunication based on this.

men had the unenviable task of investigating two fellow pastors and reporting their findings to the entire Elder Council. They spent significant time in silence and solitude, reading and meditating on Scripture, repenting of personal sin, and praying for God's wisdom. This was important because our enemy will use every opportunity he can to cause division, fear, doubt, confusion, and personally attack the leaders in the church, especially at a vulnerable time like this. After consecrating themselves, the EIT began the investigation by collecting information regarding the charges from all of the elders. Based on these charges, the EIT formulated questions for a personal meeting with Bent Meyer where he would be given a chance to respond to the charges. Upon completion of the investigation, the EIT was asked to review the evidence and the results of their meeting with Bent, and for each man to produce a statement that reflected their conclusion. The next step was for all of the elders to convene and make a final determination regarding Bent's eldership status, which is a binding and final decision.

The elders gathered with Bent on Monday, October 29th. The EIT presented the charges they found to be credible, which **included** ***The inclusion of this word implies and misrepresent what was actually spoken in the room. There were other charges presented into evidence, none. The only charge was unhealthy lack of trust.*** Inappropriate behavior due to an unhealthy lack of trust in, and respect for, the senior leadership of Mars Hill Church. Each elder on the EIT read their personal statement and Bent was given a second opportunity to respond to the charges, make his own statement, and field questions from the elders. Upon completion of the questions and Bent's responses, Bent was dismissed and the elders deliberated over the matter. According to our current bylaws, the elders must determine by a 75 percent majority whether the charges have been established as credible, and if so, the appropriate discipline that should take place.

The following two motions were proposed and seconded.

Motion 1: We find Bent Meyer guilty of the charge of displaying an unhealthy lack of trust in, and respect for, the senior leadership of Mars Hill Church

Motion 2: Based on Bent Meyer's repentance we recommend that he continue as an elder of Mars Hill Church on probation, with details and conditions to be overseen by the shoreline campus elders.

Both motions were unanimously approved and supported by the elders.

Pastor Bent and his wife Joanne are dearly loved and it is the collective desire and intention of the elders to see Bent fully restored as an elder of Mars Hill. The shoreline campus elder team will work with Bent to oversee his restoration as an elder and the particular details and conditions of his probation. We would encourage all of you with a relationship with the Meyer family to reach out to them and continue to be a part of their lives. Furthermore, as stated in our previous announcement, Bent will receive full salary and benefits through the end of December 2007.

Jamie Munson

Lead Pastor

Mars Hill Church  
1401 NW Leary Way, Seattle, WA 98107  
o: 206.816.3773  
e: jamie@marshillchurch.org  
w: www.marshillchurch.org

## **Bent Meyer's response**

My response to Scott is as follows:

From Bent Meyer <bent.meyer@gmail.com>

To Pastor Scott Thomas <scott@acts29network.org>,

Date Tue, Oct 30, 2007 at 5:04 PM

Subject Re: Members communication

mailed-bygmail.com

My response and encouragement.

The responsibility to weigh of matters and made decision, which may or may not be popular, is inherent in being a leader. In the deliberations related to matter that I believed of great consequence, I found myself at odds with the majority of elders. I spoke my convictions, but was not joined with agreement by them. The elders have ruled and I will abide by that ruling.

Going forward, my convictions are responsive to scripture, which directs me to embrace the governing authority in whatever its constitution at this time is (Rom 13). I intend on doing so, and conduct myself within the processes outline by that authority.



**On 11/09/2007**

***The 142 page response to members questions related to the firing of two elders was published. It is too long to include in this set of documents. If you never to got a copy or have disposed of it, I can make one available.***

## Steve Tompkins contact attempt

From Pastor Steve Tompkins <st@marshallchurch.org>  
To bent.meyer@gmail.com,  
date Nov 19, 2007 1:45 PM  
subject communication

Hey bro, I feel like I'm chasing you down and getting nowhere. I have not heard from you since we met at Hotwire, and I did not see you yesterday. What's up?

Thanks,

Steve

Steve Tompkins  
campus pastor  
Mars Hill Church | shoreline campus  
3524 NE 95th St Seattle, WA 98115

c 206.706.6641 f 206.706.6792  
e steve@marshallchurch.org  
w1 www.marshallchurch.org  
w2 www.marshallchurch.org/shoreline

***I had intentionally not responded to Steve, because I was processing the 142 page document and coming to the conclusion that the promise to retract specific language contrary to the findings of the investigation did not happen and would not happen. Mark and company would continue to insist there was far more amiss with my character and practice than what was adjudicated. Communication with the congregation was being spun to justify and obscure fundamental character flaws in Mark that Jamie was obliged to parrot. Joanne and I had come to believe we would not function well under this deceptive leadership.***

***Steve had diligently tried to get me to "just trust Mark explicitly". I told him I had been alone with Mark on some occasions, which had given me reason to not trust him. He asked me for details. I told him I would not do that, since there were no witnesses during those time. It would be my word against Mark. Who would be believed? I would not be believed, besides it would not be scriptural. But, he had been in situations in which we both, as well as, the rest of the elders, which I would not have to tell him about, which demonstrated Mark was not truthful or trustworthy.***

As per the bylaws, I am providing a hard copy of the following. I will, however, follow up with an electronic version, which will include an excerpt from the 9/29/07 sermon for the elder's consideration.

***Reading the answer to "Did Mark really say." In the 142 page response to the members was too blatant a lie to tolerate. The executive elders had proven numerous times that they were not trustworthy.***

## **Resignation letter from Pastor Bent Meyer**

November 14, 2007

Regrettably, I must resign from eldership at Mars Hill Church. The years of service Jesus has provided has been important for many in the church and a challenging, enjoyable chapter in my life. I have marveled over the years, to be in the presence of miracles occurring in the office I occupied; lives transformed from being stuck to freedom and vision in Christ. It has been a privilege.

I will be transitioning into a new chapter, still serving Jesus, eager to participate in his kingdom being populated, so he will come soon.

I have enclosed portions of the document answering questions the members have had over the last 6 weeks. I am grieved by the nature of the characterization of me and the violence associated with it.

I wish to do no harm to Mars Hill Church, its members, staff or its future. It is entirely in the Lord's hand to bless or curse. I would appeal to you, that you reciprocate in like manner. I and others will monitor what is said about me going forward.

With sorrow,

Bent Meyer

## Annotated response to excerpts from the 142 page document

A letter from Pastor Mark Driscoll

November 8, 2007

Dear Mars Hill Church Members,

I grew up in Seattle not knowing Jesus. Thankfully, Jesus saved me when I was nineteen years of age while a college freshman. Shortly thereafter He led me to my first church, where a humble and godly pastor was used of God to change my life by teaching me about Jesus from the Bible. While attending my first men's retreat with that church, God spoke to me for the first time in my life. He told me to marry Grace, preach the Bible, train men, and plant churches. It was then, at the age of nineteen, that I began preparing to devote my life to obeying His call for me. I studied speech in my undergraduate work to prepare for preaching. I joined as many as six Bible studies a quarter to learn Scripture. I began reading nearly a book a day, which continued for many years. I married Grace while still in college. In addition, I began recruiting college friends to one day be part of the core group for Mars Hill Church, which I intended to see planted in Seattle. Following graduation from college, Grace and I moved back to Seattle where we got jobs and started settling in as a broke young couple trying to figure out how and where to plant Mars Hill Church.

By the age of twenty-four we were gathering the core group for the church plant while I was working part-time at Antioch Bible Church and a Christian bookstore that was open in Greenwood at the time. Joining me in the plant were two godly men named Mike Gunn and Lief Moi who were very much devoted to the work and, although young and inexperienced, I praised God for the support of those men who remain friends to this day by God's grace.

At the age of twenty-five I had the privilege of preaching the opening sermon at Mars Hill Church and I have remained the primary preaching pastor ever since. I have learned a lot over the years. Much of that learning has been through mistakes, failure, and pain. The early years of the church, chronicled in my book *Confessions*, were very difficult in every way. In more recent years, our fast growth has been a wonderful blessing but also fraught with difficulties.

For me personally, everything culminated at the end of 2006. Despite rapid growth, the church was not healthy and neither was I. My workload was simply overwhelming. I was preaching five times a Sunday, the senior leader in Mars Hill responsible to some degree for literally everything in the church, president of the Acts 29 Church Planting Network which had exploded, president of The Resurgence, an author writing books, a conference speaker traveling, a media representative doing interviews, a student attending graduate school, a father with five young children, and a husband to a wife whom I have adored since the first day I met her and needed my focus more than ever. I was working far too many hours and neglecting my own physical and spiritual well-being, and then I hit the proverbial wall. For many weeks I simply could not sleep more than two or three hours a night. I had been running off of adrenaline for so many years that my adrenal glands fatigued and the stress of my responsibilities caused me to be stuck "on" physically and unable to rest or sleep. After a few months I had black circles under my eyes, was seeing a fog, and was constantly beyond exhausted.

Nonetheless, the demands on me continued to grow as the church grew. We added more campuses, gathered more critics, saw more media attention, planted more churches, purchased more real estate, raised more money, and hired more staff. **It was at this time that I seriously pondered leaving Mars Hill Church for the first time ever.** (I know of two occasions when you voiced contemplating taking offers being presented to him in the presence of all the elders.) I still loved our Jesus, loved our mission, loved our city, and loved our people. However, I sunk into a deep season of despair as I considered spending the rest of my life serving at Mars Hill Church. I simply could not fathom living the rest of my life with the pace of ministry and amount of responsibility that was on me. Furthermore, the relational demands of the church and its leaders depleted me entirely. In short, I had lost my joy and wanted to lose my job before I lost my life. Tucking my children in bed at night became a deeply sorrowful experience for me; I truly feared I would either die early from a heart attack or burn out and be left unable to best care for my

children in the coming years. I have met many pastors who have simply crossed the line of burnout and never returned to health and sanity and that was my frightful but seemingly inevitable future.

One of the problems was that Mars Hill had essentially outgrown the wisdom of our team and needed outside Counsel. The church had grown so fast that some of our elders and other leaders were simply falling behind and having trouble keeping up, which was understandable. To make matters worse, there was a growing disrespect among some elders who were jockeying for and abusing power. The illusion of unity our eldership had maintained over the years was kept in part by my tolerating some men who demanded more power, pay, control, and voice than their performance, character, or giftedness merited. While this was a very short list of men, as elders they had enough power to make life truly painful. (This is a broad brush to tar me with. You are speaking in the plural, which includes me. This becomes slander/libel.)

At the same time I began receiving other lucrative job offers that would allow me to study, preach, and write without all of the administrative duties and burdens for which I am not sufficiently gifted to be responsible for. For the first time in my life, the thought of leaving Mars Hill sounded very relieving. Since I had given ten years of my life to the church and love the people desperately, it was obvious to me that something was deeply wrong that such offers would even be intriguing. So, I began pursuing council from godly men outside the church that I respected. I spoke with Tim Keller about the difficulties of an urban church, John Piper about how to sustain longevity in the ministry, C. J. Mahaney about bitterness that had grown in me against some elders of Mars Hill and my need to grow in humility, D. A. Carson about how to best study so as to become an even better Bible teacher and writer, Gerry Breshears about how to best train other men for ministry to share the load, Pastor Larry Osborne about how to best architect a multi-campus church, and Pastors Craig Groeschel and Ed Young Jr. about how to lead a church of thousands and possibly tens of thousands. On top of that, I pursued council from a Christian doctor regarding my health and what needed to change in my diet, exercise, and schedule. In short, I sought wise outside Counsel regarding if I should stay at Mars Hill and make changes in my life and our church, or simply move on to another church and start over. (I believed his consideration to be true, which weighed greatly in my concerns of the Bylaw opening gates for mischief.)

The consensus was that Mars Hill was poorly architected to be a multi-campus, multi-elder, multi-thousand person church. My administrative gifts had simply reached their capacity and the church needed to be re-organized so that campuses could be led by elder teams to ensure that our people were best cared for, our doctrine best taught, and our mission best led. This meant that I needed to give up a great deal of power and trust other elders, deacons, and members to care for the church with the same passionate affection that I have for our people.

To begin this process I had to go first and divest myself of a great deal of power. In the history of the church I have held the three positions of greatest authority. Legally, I was the president of Mars Hill Church the organization. Practically, I was the preaching pastor and primary voice of Mars Hill Church. Administratively, I was the president of the elder board and highest authority on the staff. So, I resigned as the legal president, resigned as the president of the elder board, and resigned as the highest authority over the staff. I have retained the position of primary preaching pastor but have also started a preaching cadre to train many other elders in preaching so as to begin sharing that load roughly twelve times a year with other gifted men. Having shared power, I was then able to establish a new Executive Elder board to architect the future of Mars Hill.

I remained one of the men on that team to help lead the church but came under Pastor Jamie Munson, the team leader. I simply did not have the giftedness or time to architect something as complex as our church, which intended to grow to multiple campuses, possibly even stretching out of state or out of country. Yet, I wanted to ensure that our church remained theologically precise and committed to not just growing but also caring for our people. So, the new Executive Elder team sought outside counsel from bigger churches that we respect. At this time, Pastor Tim Beltz also became a valuable asset thanks to his many years of nonprofit management experience for ministries much larger and more complex than ours, along with Scott Thomas who had pastored at many other churches, and Pastor Bubba Jennings whose leadership and management gifts would allow the Ballard campus to become a center of excellence and equipping center for new campus launches.

The newly formed Executive Elder team began working on proposed new bylaws that would serve as the architecting document for a better Mars Hill. The big issue was empowering our campus pastors to lead elder teams. This would ensure the best care for the people at each campus by being accessible and able to make decisions quickly. Simply, we could not care for our people across multiple campuses with one large and fast-growing elder team that had to meet to make decisions across campuses many of us had never even attended. So, the bylaws had to be rewritten to break the elders into teams with campus areas of oversight as well as accountability. As an aside, the rewriting of our governing bylaws is something we had done on other occasions throughout the history of Mars Hill, so this was not a new experience. Sadly, it was during the bylaw rewriting process that two of our elders, who curiously were among the least administratively gifted for that task, chose to fight in a sinful manner in an effort to defend their power and retain legal control of the entire church. This included legal maneuvering involving contacting our attorney, which was a violation of policy. (See later comments) one elder who is no longer with us disobeying clear orders from senior leaders about not sharing sensitive working data with church members until the elders had arrived at a decision, which has caused much dissension, and that same elder accusing Pastor Jamie Munson, who was the then new Lead Pastor of Mars Hill, of being a deceptive liar in an all-elder meeting with elder candidates present, despite having absolutely no evidence or grounds because it was a lie. This was heartbreaking for me since I have seen Pastor Jamie saved in our church, baptized in our church, married in our church, birth four children in our church, and rise up from an intern to the Lead Pastor in our church with great skill and humility that includes surrounding himself with godly gifted older men to complement his gifts.

To make matters worse, this former elder's comments came after my more than one-hour lecture in that meeting based on a twenty-three-page document I gave the elders as a summary report about what I had learned from the other pastors I had met with in addition to months of researching Christian movements. I had just explained the cause of the pains we were experiencing as a leadership team as largely tied to our growing number of elders and campuses, as well as ways that my research indicated men commonly respond by sinfully seeking power, money, preference, control, and information as ways to exercise pride and fight for their interests over the interests of the team, church, and mission of Jesus Christ. (See later comments)

The elder who sinned was followed up with following the meeting by a rebuke from a fellow Executive Elder, but repentance was not forthcoming. To make matters worse, some vocal church members ran to that elder's defense without knowing the facts, made demands upon the elders, acted in a manner that was not unifying or helpful, and even took their grievances public on the Ask Anything comment portion of our main website for my forthcoming preaching series. Of course, this was done under anonymous names to protect their image in the eyes of fellow church members while maligning the elders publicly. Some church members even began accusing the other elders of grabbing power and not caring for the best interests of our people, which is nothing short of a lie and contradictory in every way to the entire process we were undertaking. It broke my heart personally when amidst all of this, a member asked me on behalf of other members if the elders really loved our people. Now having given roughly half my life to planning for and leading Mars Hill Church, the questioning of my love and the love of our elders, some of whom even got saved in our church, for our people was devastating. Today, I remain deeply grieved by and for one man, but am thrilled that what is best for Jesus and all of Mars Hill has been unanimously approved by our entire elder team because I do love Jesus and the people of Mars Hill. Furthermore, my physical, mental, and spiritual health are at the best levels in all of my life. Now having joy and working in my gifting I am beginning to see what a dark and bitter place I once was in and deeply grieve having lived there for so long without clearly seeing my need for life change. My wife and I are closer than ever and she is the greatest woman in the world for me. I delight in her, enjoy her, and praise God for the gift that she is. She recently brought me to tears by sweetly saying, "It's nice to have you back," as apparently I had been somewhat gone for many years. Our five children are wonderful blessings. I love being a daddy and am closer to my children with greater joy in them than ever. In short, I was not taking good care of myself and out of love for our church I was willing to kill myself to try and keep up with all that Jesus is doing. But, as always, Jesus has reminded me that He is our Senior Pastor and has godly other pastors whom I need to empower and trust while doing my job well for His glory, my joy, and your good.

The past year has been the most difficult of my entire life. It has been painful to see a few men whom I loved and trained as elders become sinful, proud, divisive, accusatory, mistrusting, power hungry, and

**unrepentant.** (This is a piling up of charges that were found to be not credible. What do you do with people who libelously slander?) It has, however, been absolutely amazing to see all but one of those men humble themselves and give up what is best for them to do what is best for Jesus and our entire church. In that I have seen the power of the gospel, and remain hopeful to eventually see it in the former elder who remains unrepentant but to whom my hand of reconciliation remains extended along with a team of other elders assigned to pursue reconciliation if/when he is willing. Furthermore, sin in my own life has been exposed through this season and **I have also benefited from learning to repent of such things as bitterness, unrighteous anger, control, and pride.** (But, who have you spoken to face-to-face that you were bitter toward? It couldn't be me since; we have never talked about anything like bitterness, anger, control or pride.) As a result, I believe we have a pruned elder team that God intends to bear more fruit than ever. This team of battle-tested, humble, and repentant men is now both easy to enjoy and entrust.

Emotionally, I told our Board of Directors recently that I felt like I walked Mars Hill down the aisle and married her off so that she could be best cared for and loved in the next season of her life. I remain her father who loves and cares for her and is vitally involved in her growth and well-being, but now trust the elders to take good care of her thanks in part to a structure that enables her to be loved well. Subsequently, for the first time in my tenure at Mars Hill I am able to work in my area of gifting with men I trust on a mission I believe in with church members I love and a Jesus I worship. That harmony is priceless.

Personally, I want to thank Pastor Jamie along with the other elders who worked so hard to provide answers to the questions that were gathered from our members. Today I write this letter after finishing my studies for my upcoming sermon on Philippians 2:12–30. In God's providence it is incredibly timely. There was a conflict in the that church with two leaders (4:2), which is akin to our recent discipline of two elders. Paul said that the people in the church were "grumbling" against and "questioning" the church leadership that were dealing with the conflict. He tells the church to not nitpick over details, but rather be "blameless" and "innocent" and work for unity so that the world will not think less of Jesus. To remedy things Paul sent a letter to the church he planted and cared for, which prompted me to write this letter to you.

In that letter, Paul commends Timothy as a good leader, which reminds me of Pastor Jamie. Timothy was a young man saved under Paul's ministry and personally trained by Paul, much like Pastor Jamie who was saved under my preaching and has been personally invested in by me for a decade. Timothy is commended because his first allegiance is to Jesus and he also both cares for the people and respects the leadership of Paul as the founding pastor, which is exactly the kind of man Pastor Jamie is. Furthermore, Timothy's example shows the two sides of leadership that eldership requires. **Your elders have been dealing with pain caused by one-sided leadership by some only caring for the people but not respecting fellow pastors.** (How many times have your fellow elders and wives been disrespected and by you?) Some translations also say that Paul and Timothy were "like-minded" in their philosophy of ministry, which curiously enough is the root of all of our conflict recently and led to what Paul called "grumbling" and "questioning." In light of that, I want to thank Pastor Jamie and the other elders who put so much time into this document as they love you and Jesus and are hoping to quiet any "grumbling" and "questioning" by being open and truthful. In Philippians 2:12–30 Paul also lifts up Epaphroditus as a good example of a faithful church member who gives and serves generously. My prayer is that you would be an Epaphroditus for us.

Lastly, I felt it was important to write this preface to our lengthy document so that you would understand what has transpired behind the scenes and in my heart over the past year. Had I simply left Mars Hill, the hearts of some elders would have virtually guaranteed crippling division in the church. So, I have stayed to grow in my own repentance and not abandon the work Jesus called me to nearly half my life ago because I love you. Today, I am weary but elated and confident that Jesus who began this work will see it through to completion. I am confident that I will be able to remain with you for the rest of my life serving as my gifts permit. Subsequently, I am rejoicing in what Jesus has done, is doing, and will do both in and through Mars Hill Church.

For Jesus' Fame,  
Pastor Mark Driscoll



Excerpts from response answers to members of Mars Hill Church, dated: November 8, 2007

**Q:** My question is was Mark talking about Pastor Bent and Pastor Paul in the sermon [The Sunday before Bent and Paul were fired Mark preached the "Fathers and Fighting" sermon. In it he mentions wanting to follow Nehemiah's lead]? "And beat some of them! Now, he's an older guy and he's beating up certain members of his church. What do we do with that? I'll tell you what I'd like to do with that. I'd like to follow in his example. There's a few guys right now, that if I wasn't going to end up on cnn, I would go old testament on them, even in leadership in this church." (Listen to the 9/29/2007 sermon.)

**Q:** Did Pastor Mark really say this?

**A:** I don't remember what I say word for word in a sermon since I don't follow a manuscript so there is variation from service to service. I do remember saying something like that (if not those exact words) but I don't remember thinking about Paul and Bent at the time. (Please listen to the excerpt from the sermon in question. The first part is the marshal arts analogy and the second clip identifies specifically firing elders, which would happen 11 hours from the time I listened to the message. Others confirm hearing the same think later in the day.) Paul and Bent and their families have been friends for many years to the degree that we have even enjoyed vacations together (If Mark means our elders retreat as a vacation, that is a stretch and misrepresentation of the facts), which illustrates that I do love them, care for them, am concerned for them, and desire what is best for them providing it is not at the expense of the well-being of the entire eldership and entire church. Throughout our recent dealings with Paul and Bent I have been mostly discouraged and depressed by their sinful actions and attitudes, but not angry with them in the manner that Nehemiah was angry. (Am I to understand violence without anger? I suppose he could simply be laughing as he executes his attempts to satisfy his [....]? You said "There's a few guys right now, that if I wasn't going to end up on cnn, I would go old testament on them, even in leadership in this church.") My anger, however, has been with a few church members who were acting very disrespectfully, sinfully, and proudly toward some of the elders who were dealing with Paul and Bent and thereby making it very complicated and difficult to seek reconciliation with Paul and Bent. (Mark has called me and spoken of some future meeting. I will entertain such a meeting, but only in a public place with a tape recorder running or with a mutually agreeable witness present. Yes, it has come to this. I wish to do Mark no harm, but I am not convinced the reverse is true.) My point was that sometimes all that God has accomplished and the people have worked for can be undermined by a few unrepentant sinners who have lost sight of the needs of the many and that is cause for anger. On that point I completely understand Nehemiah's anger and have on occasion shared it but have never acted out physically as Nehemiah did. (p 24) (I have attached the specific portions of the sermon to refresh your memory.)

**Q:** What precisely does an expression of "unhealthy dissent" look like, so that we as members and elders might avoid it?

**A:** Each elder is his own man and needs to be faithful to the guiding of the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures, his spiritual authority and his conscience. Scripture is clear and speaks often to the desire for unity amongst the church and its leaders. When at all possible we do hope for the elders to be unified regarding a decision or direction of the church. However we cannot and do not mandate one to violate a personal conviction of his conscience. (Is this true in your experience and the experience of the other elders?)

I said, what was non-negotiable to gain a "yes" vote, was the dismissal of the three concerns I had. I was open to talk about it, but I was declaring my voting position unambiguously. I took the risk, knowing I had already been told to consider resigning, if I didn't cooperate and sell the bylaw proposal to the younger men. I understand Scott clarifying his statement that it was pastoral Council, but both Paul and I understood it at the time as a threat. Under that threat I chose to stand more firmly, believing you, the other elders who have experienced the same events as I, would protect the integrity of the process.

There was and never has been a selfish, self-interest or an effort to grab power. Remember, I declined the suggestion that I nominate myself to the exec elder team. I have an interested in balance and accountability, not power. I believe the council of elders are little more than deacons now, delegated authority, yes, but so are deacons. You gave up being scriptural elders.)

The course of action with a disagreement depends on a few variables: Is it a closed handed or open handed issue? Is it a simple matter of opinion or preference? Is their disqualifying sin involved? Will the dissenting elders agree to disagree respectfully or will there be division caused as a result of

the disagreement? When a final decision is made by the elders will the dissenting submit to the final decision without causing division? How do they go about their dissenting? All of these questions factor into the outcome of any conflict. Depending on the severity of the issue and the behavior of those involved, there are different outcomes that range from a healthy disagreement among elders to the removal of an elder. We do not mandate with an iron fist that every elder blindly agree with those in authority over them and encourage challenge, discussion, and debate provided it is done respectfully, according to protocol and not in a spirit of division. (P 46)

**Q:** Were the new bylaws approved unanimously?

**Q:** When Bent was reinstated as an elder under probation was he allowed to vote on the new bylaws? If so how did he vote?

**Q:** How can votes cast for the new bylaws be seen as "unanimous" when 2 elders that may have good input lost their chance to vote right before these were being voted on? This is coincidentally close timing. Were Bent and Paul removed in time just to get the bylaws passed in full agreement because they had genuine concerns?

**Q:** Is it true that two elders who made their dissent known in writing to the body of elders were removed from eldership with a week of their having submitted such dissent?

**Q:** Were the elders free to vote against the new bylaws, or were they informed that they were non-negotiable?

**A:** Paul Petry was removed as an elder of Mars Hill Church for disciplinary reasons on October 15, 2007 prior to the elders vote regarding the bylaws on October 29, 2007 and therefore was not eligible to vote on the bylaws. Paul was not removed for his dissenting opinion regarding the structure but his behavior, accusations of other elders, and breaking of elder protocol and confidentiality were factors in his termination from staff and eldership but not the sole reason.

Pastor Bent Meyer was suspended as an elder of Mars Hill Church (9/29/07) pending the results of his investigation (9/10/07) which was held on October 29, 2007 after the approval of the bylaws. Bent made it known in writing to all of the elders that given the opportunity to vote he would vote no regarding the approval of the new bylaws but would submit to the eldership as a whole if they were approved. Bent was not removed for his dissenting opinion of the bylaws but his behavior and breaking of elder protocol and accusations of other elders were factors in his termination from staff. (How did I break elder protocol, when I had clearly stated to Jamie that I would call church Council and he did not address or tell me not to when we met together? Besides, I had done it many times before, to protect the church from future litigation.) The remaining 23 elders voted that he was guilty of the charges.

The elders eligible to vote did so unanimously in support of the proposed bylaws. According to the voting procedure a 2/3 approval was needed and had Bent and Paul both voted no the bylaws would have still passed and been approved.

All elders are asked to vote their conscience in accord with what is in the best interest of the whole of Mars Hill Church and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Each man is permitted to disagree and have their own opinion provided it is not contrary to Scripture and is not divisive (I maintained an effort to not be divisive, since I knew I was in territory that would be punished and I didn't want to give credible ammunition to hold against me. Scott explained protocol related to talking laterally with other elders about my concerns. I was only permitted to raise my concerns with my supervisors, which I did.)

so that when the eldership makes a decision whether unanimous or not we move forward together as a unit in submission to that decision.

With any board of any organization there is the potential of corruption and misuse of authority and power. At the end of the day the elders have agreed that this structure is the best right now to lead Mars Hill Church into the future. Will it change again, probably, and at that time we'll need to go through the same process which is to prayerfully, biblically and wisely determine what is in the best interest of Mars Hill Church and the Gospel, not what is in the best interest of one or two elders. (p.54) (This again is a mis-characterization of the facts.) (p 50)

**Q:** If the elders felt the need to utilize Council and outside sources to come to competent understanding of these bylaws, why are members prohibited from seeking outside insight on the documents that are to govern our relationship to Mars Hill? (Not all members of MH have engaged in legal training.)

**A:** The elders that were charged with the crafting the Bylaws revision had a responsibility to seek legal Council. Members are not prohibited from seeking outside Council for anything, but they are not allowed to have any documents prior to ratification. The reason is that the members are not liable for any violation of the corporation, financially or otherwise. The elders alone are culpable for corporate proceedings. (The question here is where the other elder's responsible agent to make sure the bylaw proposal was well understood by all the elders from a legal prospective, which also means fully understanding the language? I submit, "Yes". Jamie or whoever wrote this answer eloquently focuses the responsibility, "The reason is that the members are not liable for any violation of the corporation, financially or otherwise. **The elders alone are culpable for corporate proceedings.**" You and I were responsible agents. Being barred, which I did not think I was, from seeking available information that each elder had a legal right and responsibility to do is remiss in protecting the whole church. Also note the members have more privilege to seek Council than the elders under what is declared to have been the protocol. Isn't that curious? Lessons to learn - It would have been better, if Nat Taylor was invited in to our meeting to answer our questions, but that provision was not made.

Jamie and the others are not lawyers (interpreters of the civil law). Though they can ask good questions and anticipate problems well to protect the church, they are not the exclusive repository of wisdom. Besides, voting on a legally binding document such as the Bylaws requires attention to detail and a full legal understanding of the language by all those that vote.) (p 55)

**A:** Paul and Bent were the only elders that verbalized a disagreement with the Bylaws. (Is this really true? I think I read other voices in disagreement. Or are the others I know, who disagreed, silent to the exec elders, but complained in sidebar fashion? Gentlemen, you need to step-up and be known or your complaints no more than pass air.) The other elders recognized that the Bylaws revisions were necessary to accommodate the growth and mission of the church. The manner in which they exercised their right to speak up about their concerns contributed to their termination. Bent acknowledged that he was unwise in his tactics even though he maintained a position inconsistent with the rest of the elders. This is acceptable. **The way he threatened other leaders** (Threatened other leaders? This is the first time this charge has been voiced. Would some of you please point out the threatening language? If there is no evidence, deal with the exaggeration and call it slander. But, there is one that has used threatening language Mark!) **and cast dispersion about their motivations overshadowed** (Would you please read the paragraph again? I was reflecting back my perception of what I was experiencing. The email was intended for Jamie, who officiated the actions of the other exec elders and for the reading of any he chose to show it to.) his concerns and thus was unsuccessful in contributing to any changes. Paul and Bent both spoke to people outside of the eldership about the document and contributed to a volatile response that remains unsettled. (Why does this keep surfacing, since, with the evidence I provided, was not a credible charge?) Eldership is built on trust of information, people, and resources. Misusing entrusted information can be detrimental to the unity and mission of the church. They **both contacted the lawyer independent of the structure established by our lead pastor.** Information about people within the church and documents that are not ratified must be guarded from those who may misinterpret them and thus create undue dissension. (pp. 59-60)

**A:** Both Paul and Bent disagreed in a disrespectful manner and that expedited their termination. Bent used accusatory terms of which he has since repented. Paul became obstinate and appeared unmovable. Paul accused Pastor Jamie of hiding a real copy of the Bylaws. He contacted people outside of his scope of rights to discuss the Bylaws. He defended his dissent as being responsible for the vote. **Elders can and do occasionally argue their positions and views but must come to an amiable conclusion in a unified manner for the good of the entire church and not for the benefit of a few.** (Reiterating selfish motive, underscores the clear belief. If my motive was to secure for myself benefit, I sure would not do it this way. I was pretty sure the bylaws would pass, but I couldn't vote "Yes" in the environment I had experienced. Yet, I wanted to give Jamie and others time to talk about my concerns, if they wanted to.) This was not the way things were progressing with Paul. (p 60)

**A:** Paul and Bent were terminated in a private manner. The Bylaws requires that any elder who is under investigation be communicated to the church. Their employment is at the discretion of their supervisors. (This is a curious statement, since Mike knew nothing about the termination, until I called him about 8:30 PM, 9/29/07.) Some actions of elders will expedite termination and the process for being investigated. (p 61)

**A:** The Elder Investigation Taskforce is prescribed in our Bylaws and this procedure was followed to the letter of the law. Not all miniscule procedural details are specified in the Bylaws, but everything was followed as prescribed. Some of the criticisms of this specific case involve opinions of others as to how the specific details are carried out that are not specified. We do not feel the specific questions and answers are worthy of reiteration. The elders were able to ask any question of both Bent and Paul (separately) and they were given a chance to answer them openly. At the conclusion of a lengthy conversation, both Paul and Bent were found guilty of the charges by a unanimous ruling of the elders.

**The supervisors determine termination from staff.** A person may be an elder that contributes to the mission of Mars Hill but may not be a contributing staff member. (p62)

**Q:** Regarding the disciplinary actions taken regarding Bent and Paul and subsequent instructions about inquiries, I have wondered why Moira Bugler's request to read the current by-laws was given a response which treated that request as being equivalent to asking about the cases of Paul and Bent in the following thread:

<http://members.marshallchurch.org/index.php?name=PNnphBB2&file=viewtopic&t=19020>

**Q:** What did Pastor Mark mean when he wrote, "Once again, Pastor Jamie's request was to not do this. Without knowing it, you are pressing on the very issue that is the source of our current situation."

**Q:** Pastor Jamie's Oct 2 announcement regarding the termination of Paul Petry and Bent Meyer included the following: "At this time we do not want any discussion regarding this matter on the members site forums. Speculation or gossip would only be unhelpful to the church and unkind to these men. When a final decision regarding Paul and Bent's eldership status is complete the members of the church will be notified. Join us in prayer for the elders involved and for the mission and vision of Jesus to be accomplished through faithful leadership of this growing body. Any questions or comments should be directed to Pastor Scott Thomas ([scott@marshallchurch.org](mailto:scott@marshallchurch.org))." Was this supposed to refer to ANY questions about ANYTHING or just about the situation regarding Paul and Bent? If the former then I worry that Pastor Scott was incredibly busy, perhaps having to field questions that could have been fielded by others. If the latter then why did Pastor Mark reply to Moira Bugler and Dustin Dekoekkoek as though any question about the current by-laws fell under Pastor Jamie's request that any questions or comments be directed to Pastor Scott Thomas if Moira and Dustin's question had nothing to do with Paul and Bent's pending cases? Is it possible that Pastor Mark's response may have unintentionally fueled rather than quelled speculation that the case of Paul and Bent had something to do with the by-laws? I do not have any evidence on which I could ascertain what Paul or Bent were fired for and am wondering why Pastor Mark implicitly linked a question about the by-laws to questions about the discipline of Paul and Bent since it seemed Pastor Mark could have simply written, "Pastor Scott can get the by-laws to you", right? If Pastor Mark hadn't written "without knowing it" would anyone have known whatever it was that Pastor Mark wrote, that by asking about the current by-laws that faithful members were asking about the thing that was the source of the current situation? Did Pastor Mark accidentally and unintentionally link the issue of the by-laws with the issue of disciplinary action taken regarding Paul Petry and Bent Meyer? Could that response be partly why members seem to think there is some connection between the disciplinary cases and the by-laws?

**A:** We have provided the Bylaws to everyone who requested them and have also included both the old and new bylaws in this document. The Bylaws revision was the impetus that ignited the sin resident in the hearts of two men. (That is an interpretation of something unseen. Concerns related to accountability and not trusting men who shut down honest deliberations within a ruling body is sin? The whole process of exercising absolute control of the information, flow and collegial deliberation is much more closely related to sin.) They both had distrust for leadership and had not dealt with it in a healthy way. When the Bylaws were presented for review, it resulted in their accusations, demands, and threats (Again, please point to the threatening language) instead of a healthy discussion of the issues they felt were amiss. Disagreeing

with leadership is not a sin. We all must learn to ask questions in a respectful manner rather than first question the motives of a leader and accuse them wrongly. (pp 63-64)

**A:** In a legal trial, a person may be guilty of an offense and not tried for it in favor of focusing on the major violation(s). Some of the charges were lesser in degree but they were not false accusations. The investigation taskforce examined the witnesses and the evidence to determine what issues needed to be addressed. The procedure allows for open conversation and does not constitute gossip or slander. (p 62) (This is really important. In your hearing, I specifically asked Scott Thomas, "What about the other charges?" His reply was that they were not found to be "credible". Where are the witnesses? Where is the contemporary documentation describing the offense(s), confrontation, dates of meetings, actions to be taken and performance evaluations that represent less than desired performance? To continue the attack, is slanderous without evidence. Gentlemen, these principle are important for you to establish now, since, you do not want to be where I am, if it ever becomes your turn.)

**Q:** The language used to explain what happened with Paul and Bent was very slippery, and felt deceptive and secretive. We are baffled at how the pastors did not foresee what kind of effect this would have on the members. This combined with limited communication raises suspicions. Why did the elders choose to communicate only through the website? Why not send a letter to ensure that all the members would be informed?

**A:** We are still concerned for the demand for a listing of sins. The elders investigated the evidence, listened to accusations and then interviewed each man, allowing him to disprove, to determine the validity of those charges. The result was that the entire eldership (all 23 men) voted that Paul and Bent were guilty of the charges. This was not opinion, but rather a thorough investigatory process that confirmed the charges.

Paul was charged with multiple offenses and the elders ruled with a formal vote that he was not

biblically qualified to be an elder according to 1 Timothy 3; Titus 1; Acts 20:28 and 1 Peter 5. That is a serious claim. Paul remains unrepentant and has since sent a scathing letter that in essence confirmed his disqualification status. He resigned from membership even after the elders sought to reconcile with him.

Bent was charged with having an unhealthy distrust in the senior leadership that conflicted with his eldership role. The elders voted unanimously that he was guilty. Bent humbled himself and acknowledged he was wrong. (Thank you for clearly pointing to the issue from the elder's point of view. I acknowledged that the way I reflected my experience did not get the point across and that it was unintentionally wrong or sinful, because Jamie was in the line of fire as though he was the responsible party. He was the new president of the exec elders and also the one designated to receive our comments and presides over the exec elders, but he was not the primary person/s being experienced.)

**Q:** It was stated that Bent had a lack of trust in Mars Hill senior leadership. Under the old bylaws I thought all elders had the same vote. Therefore wasn't Bent part of senior leadership, so was he showing a lack of trust in the other elders? To be more blunt was he in disagreement with the majority and does that equate to sin?

**A:** Bent lacked trust in Mark Driscoll, Jamie Munson and the entire Executive Elders. They all have the same vote, but the Executive Elders (Mark, Jamie, Scott Thomas, Bubba Jennings) led the vision, direction and reorganization. His disagreement with the majority does not equate sin. His methodology to express his disagreement did. (Thank you again, for the clarity.) (p 66)

The elders gathered with Bent on Monday, October 29. The EIT presented the charges they found to be credible, which included inappropriate behavior due to an unhealthy lack of trust in and respect for the senior leadership of Mars Hill Church. (Thank you yet again, since the other charges were declared not credible, but notice the incursion of the word "included", implying either ongoing disagreement with the investigating elders and then the whole elder community, or it is another framing of language to impugn and set up for future action against me.)

It would be glorious to know that you have taken the initiative to voluntarily retract your public statements to the members and by now probably the general public. I hereby request that you do so, and that no further defamatory, slanderous or libelous statements be made about me or anyone else in the future. It

would be better for all if provocation stops here. If the ruling elders continue to make public statements, it should be about their own conduct with specific measureable repentance statements.

I am mindful those of you who were Biblical elders prior to the Bylaw adoption are not more. You are either Biblical Deacons, or Deacon/employees that can now be fired at will."

Now I have included legal definition for defamation, slander and libel. Pay attention Mark, you are on notice and you have been for a long time skating on this thin ice.

#### defamation

Is the act of making untrue statements about another which damages his/her reputation. If **the defamatory statement is printed or broadcast over the media it is libel and, if only oral, it is slander.** Public figures, including officeholders and candidates, have to show that the defamation was made with malicious intent and was not just fair comment. Damages for slander may be limited to actual (special) damages unless there is malice. Some statements such as an accusation of having committed a crime, having a feared disease or being unable to perform one's occupation are called libel per se or slander per se and can more easily lead to large money awards in court and even punitive damage recovery by the person harmed. Most states provide for a demand for a printed retraction of defamation and only allow a lawsuit if there is no such admission of error.

#### slander

Is oral defamation, in which someone tells one or more persons an untruth about another, which untruth will harm the reputation of the person defamed. Slander is a civil wrong (tort) and can be the basis for a lawsuit. Damages (payoff for worth) for slander may be limited to actual (special) damages unless there is malicious intent, since such damages are usually difficult to specify and harder to prove. Some statements, such as an untrue accusation of having committed a crime, having a loathsome disease or being unable to perform one's occupation, are treated as slander per se since the harm and malice are obvious and therefore usually result in general and even punitive damage recovery by the person harmed. Words spoken over the air on television or radio are treated as libel (written defamation) and not slander on the theory that broadcasting reaches a large audience as much as if not more than printed publications.

#### libel

Is to publish in print (including pictures), writing or broadcast through radio, television or film, an untruth about another which will do harm to that person or his/her reputation, by tending to bring the target into ridicule, hatred, scorn or contempt of others. Libel is the written or broadcast form of defamation, distinguished from slander, which is oral defamation. It is a tort (civil wrong) making the person or entity (like a newspaper, magazine or political organization) open to a lawsuit for damages by the person who can prove the statement about him/her was a lie. Publication need only be to one person, but it must be a statement which claims to be fact and is not clearly identified as an opinion. While it is sometimes said that the person making the libelous statement must have been intentional and malicious, actually it need only be obvious that the statement would do harm and is untrue. Proof of malice, however, does allow a party defamed to sue for general damages for damage to reputation, while an inadvertent libel limits the damages to actual harm (such as loss of business) called special damages. Libel per se involves statements so vicious that malice is assumed and does not require a proof of intent to get an award of general damages. Libel against the reputation of a person who has died will allow surviving members of the family to bring an action for damages. Most states provide for a party defamed by a periodical to demand a published retraction. If the correction is made, then there is no right to file a lawsuit. Governmental bodies are supposedly immune to actions for libel on the basis that there could be no intent by a non-personal entity, and further, public records are exempt from claims of libel. However, there is at least one known case in which there was a financial settlement as well as a published correction when a state government newsletter incorrectly stated that a dentist had been disciplined for illegal conduct. The rules covering libel against a "public figure" (particularly a political or governmental person) are special, based on U.S. Supreme Court decisions. The key is that to uphold the right to express opinions or fair comment on public figures, the libel must be malicious to constitute grounds for a lawsuit for damages. Minor errors in reporting are not libel, such as saying Mrs. Jones was 55 when she was only 48, or getting an address or title incorrect. 2) v. to broadcast or publish a written defamatory statement.

<http://dictionary.law.com/> Retrieved: 11/13/2007  
from Pastor Dave Kraft <dave@marshallchurch.org>  
to bent.meyer@gmail.com,

date Mon, Dec 17, 2007 at 11:28 AM  
subject QUESTION FOR YOU

Bent,

A while ago, some things were said in a cover letter by Mark in the document posted on the members site that attempted to answer questions people were asking. In that cover letter by Mark were things said about you that you felt were not true.

I asked Scott Thomas about that and he felt that a message posted by Jamie shortly after your expressed concerns set the record straight. Do you agree that your concerns have been adequately addressed?

Joyfully in Jesus,

Dave Kraft

Leadership Development Pastor

Notice the acknowledgement the Mark's language was accusatory and framed to impugn. That Jamie and Scott Thomas and maybe other did damage control was helpful, but it would not remove the weight of Mark's words. The retraction needed to come from him, not Jamie or someone else.

From bent.meyer@gmail.com>  
To Pastor Dave Kraft <dave@marshallchurch.org>,  
Date Mon, Dec 17, 2007 at 1:25 PM  
Subject Re: QUESTION FOR YOU  
mailed-bygmail.com

Jamie, Scott, Steve and I have addressed issues between us, some of which we agree and some of which we do not agree, but that's OK going forward. Jamie and I ended with resolution between us, so those matters are done.

Jamie, was clear that he was not, nor could he speak for Mark, which I agree with. That portion of the document was not spoken specifically, because Mark was not present. So I can't address the content of Mark's portion of the report with you any further. I am willing to talk with Mark, but as I said before, only with a witness.

Now, I spoke with Mike this morning, which gave me a glimpse into, what he reports as, significant character changes among the elders. I welcome that and I am cheered by the report. This is the first indication in 2 1/2 months that there is evidence of serious, systemic internal repentance. Scott Thomas had alluded to some waking up, but not with any degree of evidence. I look forward the seeing the fruit of its manifestation in the future.

Enjoy the Lord, family and the celebration of incarnation.

Bent

Give Joanne and my greeting to Susan.



From Pastor Dave Kraft <dave@marshallchurch.org>  
To bent.meyer@gmail.com>

Date Tue, Dec 18, 2007 at 9:49 PM  
Subject RE: QUESTION FOR YOU

Bent,

It sounds as though there are still some things that need (if possible) to be resolved between you and Mark. Two questions:

From your point of view, are you hopeful/optimistic that this could happen, should happen, needs to happen?

Are you open to initiating something with a witness at your side?

Joyfully in Jesus,

Dave Kraft  
Leadership Development Pastor

From bent.meyer@gmail.com>  
To Pastor Dave Kraft <dave@marshallchurch.org>,

Date Tue, Dec 18, 2007 at 11:09 PM  
Subject Re: QUESTION FOR YOU  
mailed-bygmail.com

hide details 12/18/07 Reply

Of course I am, but I'm not willing to meet him, so he can walk away saying he has extended a hand of friendship and reconciliation, without significant commitment from him to tell the truth publicly (something we would draft together) and change some specific behavior that will have to be demonstrated over the course of years to come. I don't want to play into some shallow media spin.

I am willing to begin a dialogue, but it would only be a beginning. It is unlikely he will submit to such a course. But, I would be delighted to be wrong.

Bent

To: Mars Hill Elders  
From: Bent Meyer  
Date: 01/11/2008  
Subject: Continued disappointment related to media spin.

***Correcting exaggerated communication.***

01/11/2008

The last communication from the elders to the Mars Hill Members, dated 12/5/2007, regarding my transference of membership and calling for the shunning of Paul Petry, needs correction and illumination. I am extremely disappointed by the way my good faith statements to the executive elders were misused in relation to Paul.

I requested a retraction of the false statements made regarding me in the letter from Pastor Mark and other elders that was released to members in their 142-page response to the "Ask the Elders Anything" members thread. I read the lengthy document carefully and submitted to Pastor Jamie the specific statements that needed correcting. I was expecting an authentic and full retraction of the false statements that were written about me.

In some of the explanation to the body about Paul Petry and Bent, a few statements were generalized and wrongly associated with Bent. This was not intentional, but rather an oversight due to the expedient need to communicate to the members of Mars Hill. Specifically, Bent has not been divisive among the members, or shared confidential elder documents outside of the eldership. He has worked with the elders of Mars Hill to lead the church towards health and unity. We ask for your forgiveness where we may have caused confusion about Bent. To reiterate, Bent has apologized for his actions in a humble manner and is not currently in sin against Mars Hill or the elders. Bent made a positive impact on many people through his ministry at Mars Hill and he is deeply appreciated. We know both he and Joanne will be a huge asset at their new church, and we pray for their fruitfulness and peace. They dearly love Jesus and Mars Hill, which is evident in a letter from them that we have included below.

Sadly, Paul and Bent exhibited similar behavior at the same time and, as a result, the appearance could be that they were acting in concert. But the truth is that both men acted independently and have responded very differently; we see Bent as a humble brother who has received correction and friendship from the elders and, as a result, has demonstrated mature Christian character. (This is from Jamie's letter to the members 12/5/2007)

I am also disappointed that no self-correction and acknowledgment of sin by the executive elders has not been acknowledged to me or the members.

As for issues related to Pastor Mark, I would address to him directly, but remember you have put a shield between him and anyone who he has sinned against. Matthew 18 cannot be exercised because of your protocol. So, I am going through you.

The 12/5/2007 statement from the elders stated: "The elders stand behind the decisions that have been made recently regarding Bent, his employment, and his eldership at Mars Hill."

A little background reminder:

On September 30, the evening Paul and I were terminated, neither of us was informed why or on what grounds we were being terminated. We were given no notice or warning – just an e-mail to show up for a "mandatory" meeting that night. After we were terminated, allegations by Pastor Jamie were communicated to you elders late that night (9/30/07) and then later yet to the members – but not to me or Paul. I left the building having experienced a terse termination speech by Jamie Munson followed by a verbally violent rant by Mark embedded with threats of a "full and growing file of evidence" being used against us by him if we refused to resign immediately.

This seemed strange since my performance reviews had been good, and favorable verbal expressions were often given. Equally strange to me was the fact that Mark had never confronted me on a single performance or attitude issue on a one-on-one basis or in any other context, other than expressing his disappointment over my letting Joanne (a woman) host a SALTS summit in my absence. Matthew 18 was never exercised by Mark, Jamie or Scott. If somehow I missed an occasion, there had never been two elders approach me either.

I remind you that the "Termination of Employment of Paul Petry and Bent Meyer" memo dated 9/30/07 from Jamie stated: "Paul and Bent were informed of their termination from employment of Mars Hill Church and given the option to resign from staff and eldership or be fired from staff and be subject to a full and open investigation of the elders to determine their eldership status." Employment and eldership were combined, since the issues related to employment were thought to be sufficient to reflect on eldership. I chose going through the process of trial, since I knew of no grounds for termination of employment or eldership. Besides the violence in which it was done and pre-announcement to the church, it was not something I was going to kowtow too.

The action brought against me was impulsive and reckless. It is obvious the accusations could not have been well-founded and thoroughly researched, since all but one of the charges were found to be "not credible." I remind you that "trust of senior leadership" was all that was on the table. I also remind you that Mike Wilkerson, who was my supervisor, knew nothing about the action until I told him. I had a full calendar of appointments scheduled for the next day and days following. No thought was given to the well being of those I was scheduled to meet with. The impulsiveness and recklessness was regarded as justifiable anger in Mark's sermon.

During the elder investigation team meeting, I asked about all the other charges I had been accused of. What was their status? Do you remember?

Pastor Bent Meyer - Grounds for Immediate Termination of Employment

- o Total lack of trust for Executive leadership and insubordination
- o Multiple unfounded accusations from Bent regarding abuse of power, power grabbing and motives of leadership
- o Not following protocol and process for making bylaw comments by contacting church attorney without permission

Do you know of or have you seen a different list with another set of charges related to eldership different than termination?

Pastor Scott's [who led the EIT] reply was, "the other charges were found not credible."

I have been reminded that there is a bifurcation of issues related to employment and eldership. Yet, there was only one list of charges. If the employment charges are still on the table, then is there no accounting regarding their accuracy. Yet, in the investigation, each of the charges were researched. I understand that two elders have been asked, "What were the charges that Bent was fired from his job for?" Their answer: "I don't know." Is it not strange for leaders not to know why another leader is fired?

During my trial before all of you, I asked the question again, with the same reply: all the charges, except the one related to an unhealthy mistrust of senior leadership, were found "not credible."

All of those statements were made before the 142-page document was written and distributed to the members. Even a casual reading of that document makes it clear that degrading and demeaning language was freely expressed and directed at both Paul and me. Reread Mark's preface again. His language is quite clear. He must own the content of his characterizations. His communication was public. His confession and repentance must be public also.

I also remind you that his martial arts analogy in his 9/29/2007 sermon was clearly pointed to Paul and me. If there is any doubt listen to the segment I previously sent you. I have heard it explained away as preaching hyperbola - but that is nonsense. Mark's denial is a lie. That also needs to be publicly confessed. This one is not going away and cannot be hidden. It is in the public domain.

The only thing missing in that domain is my documented account, timeline and correspondence.

**"In some of the explanation to the body about Paul Petry and Bent, a few statements were generalized and wrongly associated with Bent."<sup>1</sup>**

I had a telephone conversation with Scott Thomas expressing my dismay at the continuing defamatory, slanderous language being used, reminding him that he said on two occasions all charges, except mistrust of senior leadership, were found "not credible." He agreed and volunteered communicate a retraction to the members.

Later, I left a meeting with Jamie Munson, Steve Tompkins and Scott Thomas, in which they agreed to write a "retraction." That is why I have initiated this communication. A retraction is not an ambiguous, blame-shifting statement which ended in placing all the weight and blame on Paul. [Their statements are also untrue of Paul] Paul does not deserve this. I am greatly disappointed again and feel used inappropriately to spin the communications away from the real issues surrounding this debacle.

Those who have investigated Paul's side of the story report a much different understanding than the one-sided version which has been presented by the communicating elders. I have likewise read Paul's communication and find no lack of confession. The truth of the matter is his confession is a large blanket that covers all the elders, as well as, me. We are all guilty of not speaking up and confronting Mark's violence, heavy-handed use of position and demeaning characterization of others in our presence. So, I have to conclude Paul is smeared with the same malicious brush to obscure the sin of the senior leadership.

Now, regarding my 12/3/2007 correspondence to Jamie:

To: Jamie Munson, Elders and Members of Mars Hill Church 12/3/2007  
From: Bent and Joanne Meyer  
Subject: Transfer of membership from Mars Hill Church, Seattle to Grace Fellowship, Lynnwood.

Thank you for your generous expressions of blessing and ease with which you are expediting Joanne's and my transfer of membership to Grace Fellowship, Lynnwood.

I am grateful for the opportunity God allowed me to step into seven years ago to serve, full time, Mars Hill Church members and attendees in their seeking to be authentic expressions of Christ in the community. I experienced the purposeful joy of being in the presence of miracles as various people transitioned from being stuck in various habits of behavior and beliefs toward fulfillment in modeling Jesus in relationships and life. As the last page of this chapter closes a new one is open with delight and anticipation.

The morning after my employment was terminated, I read Rev. 3:1-13. Reading it brought me to tears. (I want you to understand it is not my practice to claim promises and hold God hostage to fulfilling them.) Yet, Jesus connected with me in a way I could not avoid.

He told members of the Philadelphian church that he was opening a door that no one could shut. Though they were a people with little power, yet they kept his word and had not denied his name with the consequence that others would know unambiguously that Jesus loved them. He ends by signing his name on them, like an artist signs his creation as an expression of his glory.

This drives me into the next chapter with anticipation and longing. Joanne and I are moving forward, believing there is an open door for us to train and spread Grace Groups throughout the Northwest Region. I am also moving toward creating a Counseling practice locally. In both instances are walking through it (the door) without hesitation. We have no intention of ruminating or living in our past.

Joanne and I are committed to create our future in step and attitude with Jesus, which means genuine gratitude for the chapter already lived and creative anticipation going forward into this new chapter.

Thank you for your contributions to the richness of our experience.

---

<sup>1</sup> This comes from Jamie's communication to the members regarding our transfer of membership – paragraph 3

***The following is the content of correspondence I sent to Mark first to forward to the elders. It wasn't likely that he would pass it on, but if he was a man of integrity he would. I did it this way to give Mark a chance to be courageous and to submit himself to elder scrutiny. I left it with him to pass it on as I asked him to do. If he didn't, it would again be another moment he chose to control communication for his own purposes.***

Bent and Joanne Meyer

*"Thank you for your generous expressions of blessing and ease with which you are expediting Joanne's and my transfer of membership to Grace Fellowship, Lynnwood."*

I was concerned the executive elders would create a fuss, preventing Joanne and me from transferring membership easily. We both had clear direction to leave Mars Hill and we did not want to be prevented from moving on. Jamie surprised me and I was grateful for that.

The rest of the email was intended to express, truthfully, how I view my years at Mars Hill Church.

I experienced the best years of the church, I believe. I have no idea what the future holds for the Church, blessing or cursing is not in my hands - that belongs to God alone. Jesus has instructed me to overcome evil with good, which is what I intend on doing. The good in this instance is to appeal to you men to bring about honest communication. Hold the executive elders to their own statement:

**"the executive team wants to conduct itself in a way that is full of integrity, walking in the light, under full disclosure."**

I do not believe they have demonstrated that. Some of you will yet be fired with less disclosure than Paul or I experienced.

I also appeal to you to cease the continual shunning and shaming of Paul and his family and take the decrees related to Paul and me off the member's site immediately. It would be best to communicate the magnitude of the cover-up that followed the actions taken on 9/30/2007 and restore Paul to good standing in the community.

I grieve with you that this is being played out in the public square so quickly. I reaffirm the material distributed did not come from me and in talking with Paul, did not come from him either.

Realize, if I had been brought into conversation with regard to future employment, a mutually agreed upon transition from employment from Mars Hill would have happened without the trauma to all. Realize also, the responses, including this communication, are framed by the violence that initiated what has followed. The violence is owned by Mark. Here again, in evaluating Paul's response, you have to factor in the opening salvo. The violence and continuing violent communication from Mark is unbecoming of the office of elder.

When you compare anything that I have said or done, or Paul for that matter, to the harsh actions and communication from Mark, at least use the same standard. I am saying nothing you are not witness to, as well as, the members. I will also remind you that the venues of communication have been yours all along. I have restrained myself, taking the blows, hoping you would act by addressing my concerns directed to you.

To date, there is no indication that Mark has been held accountable for his actions, language, anger and thus his abuse of position and power.

What has been made clear to me from the use of my 12/3/2007 correspondence to Jamie is the ease in which my well-intentioned email was used by Jamie to boil Paul in more shaming, which was deplorably wrong and something I never wanted to be a part of.

I want it to be clear that what I acknowledged to you elders all along was that I used "loud language" in one of the emails to Jamie and I could have met with him to discuss my concern again, which I did not do. My repentance was that I would not use loud language toward him in the future. You all were witnesses to this. I made no other confession or repentance of wrong doing, since there was none other on the table to confess. I did surrender to the notion that, because Jamie was hurt by the way I communicated to him I

inadvertently sinned, but all embellishment of my confession and repentance beyond that should be regarded as false twisting of the truth.

Review the documents related to language about my confession, and repentance. The language used by the communicating elders is over-stated, implying the nature of the wrong was far graver than what is true and the magnitude of my repentance was way more significant than what is true. This has been a shell game to fool anyone trying to pay attention from the real issues of sin and manipulation by the communicating elders.

I spoke clearly to the issue of trust, and did not yield. I trust no man who will not acknowledge his own sin and repent in a fashion to prevent that sin from happening again.

What has been demonstrated time and time again in this process? The executive elders believe and maintain a self-righteous position that they are free of sin. They continue to convey the fiction that their deliberations were ethical and concluded accurately on all matters of fact, process and communication, except a "few statements *that* were generalized and wrongly associated with Bent." Again, read Mark's preface to the 142-page document. Jamie has acknowledged making mistakes in the process and stated that in retrospect, he would have presented the charges in writing at the time of Paul's and my termination. That is an acknowledgment that there was a lack of discernment and thought – which has greatly wounded the church.

I appeal to you men to hold the executive elders to their own words, "the executive team wants to conduct itself in a way that is full of integrity, walking in the light, under full disclosure"<sup>2</sup> The communication has often been embellished - misinforming, withholding, and obfuscating the truth. It has been controlled to prevent disclosure - not transparent.

Regarding not trusting senior leadership, I am now assuredly guilty. The spoken and acted-out sin confirms what I spoke and wrote about before my termination. My charges are nothing the rest of you have not witnessed or been on the receiving end of yourself.

I pressed for accountability language to be written into the new bylaws, which would have created the opportunity for structure safeguarding future mischief - but that was not to be.

So, what I am addressing? Not the whether I or Paul should be employed at Mars Hill Church, not even the matter of eldership. I am addressing the violence of the process, the tight control of information, the language of assassination, which presents only one-sided communication that vindicates and obscures the sin of the senior leadership and creates a scapegoat in the person of Paul Petry. I have allowed those who communicate to do so freely without answering in public. They have spoken and written their own condemning words, while I have hoped for better of them. But, the damage control has piled up explanations to explain explanations and in a sense self-entrapment.

I remind you I have not released my correspondence or documents, hoping leadership would self-correct and disclose publicly their sin in this. I have asked Scott Thomas to release documents to Scott Golike, so he could understand and determine from himself my status at Grace Fellowship. To date this has not been done.

Finally, Paul has been the object placed before everyone to divert attention from the real issues: behavior and attitudes of senior leadership. For him to show the kind of "repentance" being demanded, he would have to surrender his convictions, become passive, absorb all the blame, and end up being a broken man with a "broken nose" that is compliant to all instructions right or wrong going forward. Be thankful he has shown himself to be a man that would, at tremendous risk to his own welfare, speak and, given a chance, vote his convictions. You might, likewise, find yourself in a similar place where the one holding the microphone and venues of communications makes the public pronouncements, while you are not permitted to speak in the same venue. Then, the moment of clarity might come.

---

2 9-30-07 memo - 7<sup>th</sup> paragraph

Mark, I am addressing this email to you first, so you can respond if you wish. If the executive elders wish to respond I welcome that also, but I do want to hear from you, not a surrogate. At this point I would like all responses in writing. After you have had a week to consider this email, please distribute it to the rest of the elders.

I am not out to get revenge or destroy you (Mark). I want to protect the Gospel and mission as you do. I do want you to be accountable for what you do and say. If this is not addressed, you will do the same thing many times over, driven by your anger and insecurity. You will destroy Mars Hill Church.

The forces that are throwing your words back on you, in my opinion, can only be stopped by a show of authentic disclosure of sin, confessed with detail and voluntary submit to measurable, and verifiable repentance over a long time span. I mean disclosure of the matters you started related to Paul and me. You placed it in the public domain. Neither Paul nor I did that.

Shows of heavy-handed suppression and retaliation will not work. Spinning information as translucent as miso soup is not believable. You are destroying your own credibility. To continue will only fold back and validate mistrust. If there is a time to listen and trust me, it is now. My concern is that you will not, because you are blind to yourself, the consequence of which will be grave.

Secondly, find a way to connect with Paul so he doesn't have to feel in danger or having to grovel. This is a family that literally feels in physical danger from you. Take a different course, with greater wisdom going forward related to him.

With sorrow,

Bent Meyer



On Jan 30, 2008 4:37 PM, Jamie Munson <[jm@marshillchurch.org](mailto:jm@marshillchurch.org)> wrote:

Dear Bent -

I wanted to let you know that we have taken down our current members communication regarding your membership transfer that was posted on 12-5-07. The notice has served its purpose in sharing our blessing and support of you as you transfer to Grace Fellowship to partner in ministry with Scott Golike. At this point we do not intend to have any further communication with our members regarding the subject.

In addition Pastor Mark continues to remain open to meeting with you and Scott Golike to pursue personal reconciliation where needed. I believe you have already been in contact with his assistant who can aid you in getting that meeting set up.

Respectfully,

Pastor Jamie

--

Bent Meyer

from <bent.meyer@gmail.com>  
to Pastor Jamie Munson <jm@marshallchurch.org>,

date Sun, Feb 3, 2008 at 6:40 PM  
subject Regarding your last communication.  
mailed-bygmail.com

Jamie,

Taking down your 12-5-07 communication about me was sensible. I wish it had been done volitionally, without compulsion.

Did you take down the post related to Paul?

I understand you want to close the books on this matter. I share the same sentiment, however, I don't have a broken nose and we might be in the 4th round of 10, you choose. Mark put this matter in the public arena on Sept 30th. He has acknowledged no responsibility or ownership of the communication. He has, in fact, lied publicly. All the "crafting" of language is seen by the crowd as deceptive - way below the dignity and responsibility of the office of elder - and many are recognizing the black hats from the white.

You have pointed to 1 Corinthians 6:1-2 to silence those who would seek openness, fairness, and in this case, justice. I point to it also: I am not restrained from informing the wider community of saints, though I have not gone there, hoping the best in you would yet come alive.

I also draw your attention to Matthew 5:21-26:

Anger

You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire. So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

I cannot walk away from this, as I would like, until there is ownership of the lies and obfuscation of the truth. This needs to happen now, so this sort of thing will not happen again. Even though other elders and staff share many of my concerns, they have been too frightened to speak up. That is not likely to continue indefinitely.

Please relay to Mark my expectation that meeting with him is the beginning of a process. To ask me what I want is unnecessary, since my previous email to him specifies what is required. I will not countenance Mark changing the focus from the process that took place and his responsibility and participation in it, to quick personal reconciliation. He must answer to the issues addressed at our meeting or another in the larger Christian community.

I would suggest you all review what Mark said in his September 30 sermon, and his words and actions that followed, as well as review, point-by-point, his preface letter to the 142- page document to the members, as a starting place. This is what is on the table, nothing else.

My expectation is a public statement will be drafted, specifically taking responsibility for each exaggeration, lie, and untruthful characterization, with a point-by-point retraction.

I appeal to you, Mark and all the elders to take this seriously.

--

Bent Meyer

## Summary of meeting with Mark Driscoll 2/14/2008

To md@marshallchurch.org,

Scott Golike <SGolike@aol.com>,

Date Tue, Feb 19, 2008 at 9:13 PM

Subject 2/14/2008 meeting summary

mailed-bygmail.com

This is a brief summary of our Thursday 2/14/2008 meeting.

Present: Mark Driscoll, Bent Meyer and Scott Golike

Meeting started at 3:00 PM and ended 4:15 PM.

I appreciate you making it clear to Scott Golike and me that my work at Mars Hill Church was done for the good of the people served and the church in general, though you said you were disappointed with my performance.

I asked you to explain the ultimate fighter analogy used prior to firing Paul Petry and myself.

You said you don't remember who you had in mind, but you were sure it was not Paul or I.

Scott Golike said he had listened to the clip earlier that morning and quoted you as saying "two leaders of the church".

You replied you don't remember. You could have been talking about the elder and staff member who approached you that morning with a matter that annoyed you. You said you had read the transcript someone had prepared for you of that clip in preparation for our meeting and it said nothing like that. You implied there might have been something wrong with the transcript.

I was disappointed you would not tell the truth. You were talking about Paul and me, leaders in your church that would be fired within hours of delivering the sermon. Remember your words, I want to "go Old Testament on them...even in leadership in this church" "if I let them get away with it I have anarchy in my team, and you know what, NO ONE IS DOING WHAT THEY ARE TOLD." "You will notice everyone on my team has a crooked nose and a good attitude." "It's heart warming. It makes so much sense to me." It would yet be good to take responsibility for your words and who you had in mind. The elders and staff of Mars Hill Church are on your team.

I asked you how the State of Washington would view preventing an officer of the church from voting on an important legal document such as the by-laws proposal.

You agreed I was a legal officer of Mars Hill Church, but I was also an employee. I did not obey protocol not talk to the church's lawyer.

I disputed knowledge of any protocol.

You said Jamie instructed the elders to run questions through him. He would ask the attorney the appropriate questions. You didn't want all the elders asking the attorney redundant questions and run up legal fees. You said the protocol is in the minutes of that meeting.

I disputed your minimization and re-voicing who said what when Paul and I were fired. You denied saying the majority of the disparaging statements at the meeting.

You put all the words said in Jamie's mouth. Paul and I both wrote our memory of what was said independently as soon as we got home. Neither of us knew the other had done this. Our accounts are very close and not at all your account.

Jamie said, "Your job at Mars Hill Church is terminated immediately." That was all. You said the rest.

I asked you to address the language you used to describe me in your cover letter to the 142 page documents sent to the Mars Hill Church members.

You said you would not retract any of it. You hold to it all. Looking at Scott, you went on to talk about how hard running Mars Hill Church had gotten for you. You emphasized you were the founder, and legal president. You were spent from all the demands on you. You said Paul and I had been obstacles in the preparation and passing of the previous by-law change and adoption. You asked if I remembered how long it took to pass.

I didn't answer, because Scott could see I was not satisfied that you held your position. He asked me if I would summarize what I objected to in that letter.

I said to him I would not give a commentary on the content of the letter. The document would speak for itself. I looked back at you Mark and told you; to this point I had not released or shown any of those documents to anyone including Scott.

You said you didn't care who saw what you wrote.

I pointed you to the charges against me reported to the elders and members before they were delivered to me. I asked you if you held to those charges.

You said you did.

I asked you about the charge of showing unhealthy family favoritism.

You said you had confronted Joanne and me about having Cameron as spokesman for SALTS recap meeting. You said you loved him, but he was not an able speaker.

I disputed Cameron's ever being an object of review at that meeting.

You also said I chose to be in class at Mars Hill Graduate School rather than conduct the meeting, especially since you hate everything about the school.

You admitted employee files were not kept up, which is being done today.

You repeated three times that I was doctrinally in error, without specifying what error.

You repeated twice that the whole pastoral care department that I created was dismantled because I had damaged and harmed those that experienced Grace Groups and Recovery groups. You said you had nothing to do with it. Mike Wilkerson, James Noriega, Phil Smidt and Kerry Michaelis had come to this conclusion and initiated this on their own.

You asked me if I knew how much money was spent on Grace Groups.

I said \$100,000 dollars.

You said it was \$250,000 and only 40 leaders to show for it.

I am appreciative you volunteered the statement that I am free to distribute documents to whomever I choose. That is a far broader license than I will exercise.

Bent Meyer 8/28/14 3:52 PM

**Comment:** Mark was clearly misinformed since all the monies were given specifically from one donor and was the only monies available to operate.

You asked my advice related to Paul Petry.

I said you should initiate contact with him.

You said I didn't know all the facts. You then looked at Scott and said it was difficult to do this since he is threatening a lawsuit and he is a lawyer.

I said contact him anyway.

I appreciate your agreement to initiate contact him.

Scott ended the meeting by giving us both his objective sense of what he experienced. He characterized it as sitting with a couple in the throes of divorce. Each has their own view, each with some sort of fault in the matter. He said from his vantage the issues are so convoluted and unresolved it would take a long time to sort out.

You then looked at me and said you have no malice toward me. We would likely cross paths in the future at a wedding or some event.

I agreed we would probably meet each other again.

If you have a change of mind regarding your words from Sept 30th and your written material, I welcome further conversation.

If I have misrepresented anything in this email, feel free to correct it and replay via email. You will notice I have included Scott. Scott if you find that I have misrepresented anything, likewise correct it via email so Mark has a record.

-

Bent Meyer

***I have received no corrections or feedback relating to misrepresentation of my account from either Mark or Scott Golike. Scott asked me a few weeks later why I didn't attempt to speak to those matters I objected to. My reply was that I cannot match Mark's debating skill. Mark has posted many times how he enjoys, as sport, spinning his opponents "like a top". I need not be a top to spin.***

***I further told him all I need to do is ask questions and Mark will dig his own hole. Get him talking long enough and the inconsistencies will become clear. I don't need to do anything but ask the questions. The record of his own words will deliver what is so vitally wrong.***

***This was hardly a meeting of reconciliation and if you have heard otherwise, the content of the meeting should simply speak for itself.***