



September 2014

Dear Friends,

Bless you! It has been a long time since I have addressed my Living Waters friends around the world but I thought this might be a good time to do so. I hesitate only because I do not want to interfere or make more difficult what is already a difficult task for you. Equipping local churches to run healing groups, especially for the sexually broken, is never easy. By God's grace, I pray that my words somehow give you grace to do what God has called you to do. Also, please forgive the three-year gap in addressing you. Perhaps the reasons for my not communicating will become apparent as you read.

Three years ago, the Living Waters Global (LWG) Council (of which I was the head) asked me to step off the Council. Their reasons were varied: the desire for better leadership in organizing a worldwide network, the unwillingness of the Latin American leader to work under me any longer due to my conversion to Catholicism, a desire for greater freedom to run a variety of groups, and a discomfort with Desert Stream/Living Waters' (DSM/LW) commitment to marriage in the public square. (LWG Council now refers to DSM/LW's 'political' bent. However, our sole social policy commitment has been to contend for the true definition of marriage.)

Three years-ago I was prepared for a redistribution of leadership on the Council. We were heading into a new stage of global development and I felt seriously challenged to satisfy all the needs and demands of a worldwide network. However, I was less prepared to discover that the Council voted me off itself while I was on a two-month sabbatical. That set in motion a series of frustrating communications with the Council. I was told that they were communicating their decision to all our constituents but since learned that many of you remained unclear and confused as to what happened.

The DSM/LW Board requested a face-to-face meeting with the LWG Council for the purpose of clarifying the confusing events surrounding my exit from the Council. Another DSM/LW board member and I flew to Canada for the meeting. From our perspective, the meeting was too brief (the Council gave us only one hour) and yielded little fruit. Our hope for a step toward reconciliation was frustrated by the Council's lack of engagement. We agreed upon a yearlong break in communication, after which we would reengage. Ten-months later, I initiated with the LWG Council for the purpose of planning another face-to-face meeting. They refused on the grounds that nothing needed to be said, and that they would communicate any decision that pertained to us when necessary.



That was eighteen months ago. We had no ongoing relationship with Council members, and as the founding source and largest expression of LW groups, no representation on the global front. We decided at that point to formally remove ourselves from the LWG network and to simply concentrate on what we have always done: proclaim the truth of Jesus' transforming mercy and help make a way for that transformation in the local church through LW groups.

We as the DSM/LW Board are dismayed if any of you have heard differently: that we do not do Living Waters anymore or are not interested in going to the nations. Nothing has changed in regards to our mission except our relationship with LWG.

At the same time, these changes with LWG have been among the most painful and transformational in our 34-year history as a ministry. We have been reduced to mercy. Our life at DSM/LW had been significantly linked to all of you. So to be distanced from you gave us space to grieve and to reflect upon who God wants us to be.

The last three years have seen the most radical changes in world history concerning sexuality and marriage: we are now clearly the despised 'moral' minority. We feel that oppression and also a deeper freedom to be who we are in the culture. For me as a new Catholic, the time has been precious in terms of going deeper into the Church. Sorting out what it means for DSM/LW to be a ministry that is genuinely committed to the whole Church has not been easy. But God loves our efforts and gives us grace to grow in unity, beginning with our staff.

Out of this good necessary tension was born (over two years) a revised guidebook that offers Catholics a better chance at grasping sexual wholeness than was offered by the former guidebook, alongside the Protestants that continue to partake of Living Waters.

We understand that some of you have been told by the Council that you cannot use the new guidebook if you want to remain in the global network. That puzzles us. Why exclude the new book when the old one is still valid? It also may put you in the position of having to make some hard choices. Once again, your hard job gets harder.

The question has been raised: are we at DSM/LW an alternative network to LWG?

No. DSM/LW is not seeking to standardize and oversee healing groups around the world. We are a prayer-based ministry in Kansas City Missouri that simply seeks to equip



churches to run LW groups by training lay persons. We have influenced the nations to do so. And we will continue to influence the nations to do so. We foresee a partnership with other nations who share our values and who want ongoing relationship.

Clarity came to us as we reviewed the reasons expressly–given for my exclusion from the Council three years ago. These differences helped us define the goals and values that we hope will guide DSM/LW in our international relationships.

1. We want to work with like-minded people who are committed to the Living Waters program (and CrossCurrent). We have honed the groups for over 30 years and the LW Training for over 25 years; we know what works. We want to equip and support people to run LW well rather than expend our efforts setting policies and procedures.
2. We want every LW/CC group to be as free of denominational bias as possible. At DSM/LW, we are refining our counsel, our groups, and our trainings in order to contribute to an authentic ecumenism.
3. We are a prophetic witness to the truth of how God created humanity in His image, and how He redeems it. That includes upholding the true definition of marriage however God calls us to do so. Though we must be wise in our truth-telling, wisdom does not free us from being persecuted.

We believe that people wanting to run LW/CC must be free to make choices based on conscience and local counsel/support. DSM/LW understands that building local groups is humble and difficult. We want to be helpful to your efforts and not add extra burdens. DSM/LW is happy to consult and support and most of all, to pray for you. Other than that, we trust you to your advisors and communities of faith.

If you desire any more clarity and assistance from us at DSM/LW, please email us at dsmlwinternational@desertstream.org. We would be happy to answer any questions you have for us. DSM/LW looks forward to many more years of ‘digging ditches’ (2K 3:15-20) of Living Waters wherever God leads.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Comiskey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Andrew and the DSM/LW Board