

May 16, 2006

Dear 3ABN Board Members;

I am a former employee of the 3ABN Trust Services located in Loma Linda under the direction of Elder Leonard Westphal. I worked there for 3 years. Recently I received a call from Molly Steensen who was investigating problems within the Trust Services department that had been reported to her, and she asked for my input. But after a battle with my conscience, I have decided I should be honest enough to put my own signature to the issues I presented since they involve the matter of justice in the work place where I was personally involved.

I sincerely admire Molly and appreciate the difficulties of her position as arbitrator in this situation. But it is just not conceivable that she could be a fair advocate for either Elder Westphal or the employees while she remained a guest in the Westphal home. What a position to put her in! I was shocked that a place of neutral ground had not been chosen for her to stay while completing her interviews. But putting that aside, unless one has worked in that office and been subjected to the variety of abuses employees are subjected to just because their integrity exposes the boss's lack of it—it may be difficult to see past L.W.'s momentary "charm."

To be absolutely fair, Leonard has some positive qualities. He claims to have a choleric-sanguine temperament which he believes makes him a good leader. He enjoys the company of people as long as he is the center of attention. He is good at delegating tasks and is quick to move in and seize an opportunity or will create one. He is bored by trivia, but not when he is in a teaching mode, for he has endless patience with questions and doesn't mind repeating himself. He used our mistakes, not to embarrass us, but so we could all learn from class participation. Because of the work load, we seldom took our recommended breaks. But from time to time, L.W would remind us that we could go outside or use the guest room if we were tired. I enjoyed his sermons, for he spoke with enthusiasm and not too long. He is imaginative and goal oriented. These are his strengths. So why am I addressing these issues now since I am no longer an employee? Because I love 3ABN, am convinced it is God's "brainchild" and I am jealous for its reputation. And Christians who choose to work for a ministry have expectations of working in a spiritual environment. After Molly's call, however, I realized Leonard's dark side continues to rule.

Scripture admonishes us not to judge one another. On the other hand, if we blind ourselves to injustice, we become a party to it. Christ did not tolerate injustice and often took the religious leaders to task for their hypocrisy. Eli was punished for not disciplining his sons. (By the way, Leonard did not hesitate to pass judgement on denominational leaders. Some of it was positive. Most of it was negative).

A year ago when Oriana, Trenton, and I had given our notices, we wondered, *Should we warn the trainees or take a chance that with new employees things would change?* If the

abuse continued, and we said nothing, we would feel like accomplices to the abuse. We decided to make it a matter of prayer because we loved both Rita and Leonard and believed God could work a change. Also, the three of us had been long time friends of Rita, whose first husband was my brother, and we considered ourselves a family with Leonard the latest member. In each of our lives, we had individually committed ourselves to serve the Lord wherever He led, and we sincerely believed our working together at the Loma Linda office was providentially arranged. God had chosen us to serve there. Therefore, we opted to be long-suffering with Leonard (who boasted that he never held anything inside) thinking perhaps he just took advantage of us because we were "family." Now I feel like an accomplice to the continuing abuse unless I speak out.

So now Leonard has lost 6 new employees (4 left early on), 2 of whom managed to "hang in there" for only a year. Were they incompetent, lazy, frequently absent or sick, hard to get along with—all acceptable reasons for termination? Both Kathy and Ervin brought improved professionalism and efficiency to the office with changes they introduced while we were still training them, so we all, including Leonard & Rita, felt confident they were "heaven sent." I heard nothing but praise for their contributions as late as last December when we visited the new office. So why were they fired? It is my understanding that Ervin was fired because he objected to Leonard's continual negative criticism of the work Trenton was doing in Florida while it was obvious to all the staff that Leonard was doing everything in his power to sabotage the new Florida office. And Leonard feels very secure in his decision-making power because he says Danny lets him do whatever he wants, so he could fire Kathy for catching him in a lie!

I can best describe our Morning Worship by quoting some of Leonard's statements that we found most annoying. Worship would start with an inspirational reading from a book. Then Leonard would launch into a story. Sometimes a succession of stories could last up to an hour. Usually they would be inspirational, having to do with his soul-winning experiences. The stories were good, but it was the derogatory remarks about other church leaders that defeated the purpose of Morning Worship, for we were hungry for spiritual uplifting. Here are some sample quotations:

"When I was a pastor, I _____." A story would follow about his soul-winning achievements, usually ending with the words, "And no one taught me! God taught me! All the other ministers were jealous of me because they were just lazy!"

"When I was a Trust Director, I _____." This story would be about his accomplishments as a Trust Director, ending with the words, "... and all the other Trust Directors were jealous of me because they are just lazy!"

He admitted to having a rage problem and said, "I usually handle it by walking away from the situation. (Chuckle) My first wife, Marci, would sit by my side during meetings with her hand on my arm—trembling for fear I would lose my temper. Thank God I never lost my temper while I was a pastor!"

"All ministers lie." Once he told me what to say on a phone call he directed me to make. It was a lie. When I objected, he said, "A little fib is alright. Everybody fibs once in a while." I responded, "Well, I don't—and if I won't lie for myself, I certainly won't lie for anyone else." He just smiled and I accomplished the phone call with tact. No lie.

"I am so proud to be a German! You know, it was the Germans who made this country what it is—by their hard work!" or "I thank God I am a German. I love me. I'm so glad He made me who I am!" On the telephone, he would kid with people, "Did you see me on TV? Did you notice my blue eyes? Ha! Ha!" And every relative he named was "brilliant".

At other times: "I do everything right." or "I never apologize!" or "I don't hold anything in!" or "I will not be humiliated! (after a phone call when he felt defeated) or "I'm not sentimental—I get things done!"

"I never take a job unless I am top man.," or "Danny lets me do whatever I want" or "I am tired of making all these trips—I don't have the strength! I need to find someone who can take my place." then "They (3ABN) will never find another Director like me!" (a visionary, that is) and "They will never move the Trust Services from Loma Linda!" (meaning he wouldn't allow it).

"When I was working at VOP, H.M.S. Jr. and I were best friends." or "It wasn't right that the ministry gave jobs to the wives of the leaders *so they could travel together on the ministry's money!*" or "I have no respect for Lonnie M. When H.M.S. Jr. invited him to come the first time, Lonnie chose another assignment, instead. Later, when he joined the VOP Lonnie brought his own people and pushed us all out!"

Referring to the leadership at 3ABN:

"Dr. Thompson is not an effective leader. He is too laid back. He lets Danny have too much power. or "Molly's husband is (describes a loser)" or "_____ (in the business office) is retarded" or "_____ (also in the business office) knows he'd better refer all documents to our office!"(we knew—or he would get yelled at over the phone). or referring to non-Adventist guests from Illinois whom Danny had invited to sing at a La Sierra Rally, "These stupid rednecks come out here from Illinois and hole up where they're staying because they're afraid to drive on our freeways!" (derisive laugh)

There are some text references these statements remind me of:

"Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant." Matt. 20:26

"If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless." James 1:26

"Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Proverbs 16:18

Fat people were on his hit list, too. This was the kind of talk we were forced to listen to every day, mostly at Morning Worship, while no one was allowed to interrupt him. When Rita did, with stories of her own, he would demand that she stop and let him tell the story because she took too long! And always we heard about how hard he worked and how lazy other people were. He measured all people by his own work ethics because that is how he values himself. Once he let down his guard as we were leaving Worship and I was the only one to hear him admit "I was always afraid I wouldn't work hard enough." So that's it? Did he grow up feeling he was valued only if he worked hard? I felt so sad for him. (And in reality, he and Rita spent only about 50% of the day in the office.)

But Leonard's insensitivity to other people's feelings was most dramatized in his attacks on the characters of Rita's former husbands—especially her first husband of 15 years who was my brother, Jason. I had been very close to both Jason and Rita and had not taken sides. And it was through Jason and Rita that we came to know their friends, Oriana and Trenton many years ago. Nevertheless we were subjected to nearly daily revisits to the sins of Rita's former husbands. It was only when the Westphals were away that our morning worships were truly spiritual. (But Leonard always reminded us to hold Worship to 15 minutes for we must not steal time from the ministry! Somehow he didn't feel so ethical when he was leading out.)

When I first met Leonard, because he had married my "sister", I hoped to find in him a "brother" substitute for the one I'd loved and lost to death. Rita and I had kept in touch after the divorce and I still considered her my sister and a precious friend. It was not to be. L.W. knew my brother many years ago as a pastor but only on a casual basis, for my brother was a serious church member at the time. But now, more than 30 years later, Leonard repeated many negative things that could only be Rita's one-sided version. I was aware of both sides because, being close to my brother, he shared hurts that he couldn't communicate at home. And Rita, who prided herself on never speaking ill of others, also contributed *privately* to my un-ease by insisting on sharing with me every derogatory anecdote she could remember about my brother until I told her I would not listen to more. But she didn't stop. (Rita smiles sweetly and does whatever she wants to do.) I suppose it was a cathartic release for her, but it hurt me because many of those complaints she described, I could understand Jason's point of view since I knew both of them so well. It was not a good match. And not only had she already used Leonard for her catharsis, but I had never seen Jason mistreat her as disrespectfully as Leonard has, so she hadn't married up! All these years later, these complaints come out. Rita is not a good listener and she complained that Jason always wanted to talk and she just couldn't listen to all he had to say! Jason's death had torn me up because I loved and missed him so much, and I couldn't get into it with her. I had always listened to Jason and understood his heart, and he treated me with love and respect. Oriana and Trenton, were hurt to hear him disparaged, too, because he had been a good friend to them. Jason was a hard worker and provided well for his family, but he abhorred a boastful spirit!

This put down of my brother began soon after I was hired and continued thereafter—to some extent—for 3 years. Early on, I would walk forty minutes before work every

morning to cry my heart out before going to work to listen to more disparaging remarks about the brother I missed so much! I wanted to quit work but couldn't because I believed the Lord had placed me in that office and I loved working for the Ministry with Oriana, my very best friend! If I quit, it would be saying "No" to God. Not until Trenton came to work about 5 months after I was hired did the tirade slacken because Trenton reprimanded Leonard kindly but firmly with, "Aren't you ashamed of yourself for talking like that in front of his sister who is sitting right here?" Trenton gently pointed out that both people might have been happily married to someone else, so we shouldn't blame either of them. L.W.'s eyes widened as if he were completely oblivious to the hurt he was inflicting since he always used the put-downs to build up his self esteem as Rita's savior: "She was a mess when I met her, but I saved her....." was his favorite theme. (He would talk like this in Rita's presence while she offered no objection.) Without apology, after that he resorted to more veiled attacks on Rita's former husbands, and I realized then that he needed this means to feed his own "savior complex." But thereafter Trenton became L.W.'s special target for complaints—*behind his back*. There is no redemptive value in making Leonard face even one of his faults, for he considers himself above reproach and would rather become the enemy than keep a friend—or friends. Yet he has admitted to a fear of being alone. He is his own worst enemy!

When Leonard hurt my friends, he hurt me. I was proud to be working with Oriana and Trenton. They were an inspiration to me—true models of Christian deportment and human decency—humble and kind. Their testimony is in the way they live. They gave 200% to the office and saved face for Leonard on many occasions, doing "damage control." Trenton's graciousness convicted Leonard several times to admit, "Trenton is a holy man. Trenton is a better Christian than I am." On the other hand, I think because Trenton modeled the virtues Leonard lacked, the latter compensated for his guilt by putting Trenton down behind his back.—and this hurt me, too!

He also took advantage of Oriana—who is a perfectionist in her work. On one occasion, I passed Leonard's office in time to hear him shouting at Oriana who was sobbing as she tried to defend herself. I learned later what it was all about. He was in a rage because she did not hop out of her chair in her office soon enough for his taste. As his personal secretary, Oriana was always loaded down with the work concerning properties, deeds, and follow-up on special cases, documents, and reports. Her work took time and concentration, and she was very thorough and conscientious. Sometimes L.W. would call 2 or 3 times within moments, interrupting her concentration. (I have been in his office and witnessed it—up and down from her chair to his office like a yo-yo!). I think she said she answered "Just a minute," or something like that on a *very few* occasions while she was at a critical point in her work. Anyway, he lost control on this occasion and accused her of taking too long to respond. He was *most* angry because she dared to try to explain and defend herself, and her tears only seemed to egg him on. When Oriana called me to her defense (as a witness that she always responded promptly when I was in her office), he became derisive and said, "Do you think she is going up against the boss?" and I feared right then that he would actually come out of his chair to harm her if he got any angrier—so I fled back to my office. ***Yes, there were times we were afraid of him!!!***

I later apologized to Oriana for deserting her, for it hurt me deeply to see my best friend in tears. But he was shouting and I dared not provoke Leonard further.

Leonard liked to give the orders, make a few calls and then congratulate himself for getting so much work done while it took us hours to carry out those orders. Then he would often be out of his office most of the afternoon. We chose to forfeit our breaks most of the time in order to get the work done. If we didn't, there would be that much more the next day.

In my first months in the office I was aghast at the wasteful spending over which we had no control—and of supplies we couldn't even use! The fact that Leonard supports 3ABN with his offerings does not give him license to waste ministry money! Appealing to Rita was useless because she would laugh indulgently, wave her hand and say, "With Leonard, more is better!" I wondered if anyone considered the poor widows who live sparingly so they can give to the Lord's work (3ABN)? I have talked to plenty of them when I was in the office and I'm sure glad that God keeps account! I understand that now the supplies are being ordered by computer which has cut the wasteful spending substantially. *Has anyone thanked Dr. Thomsen for initiating this procedure? Or, for that matter—for the talent and experience that he and Kathy have contributed to improve the efficiency of the office since they were hired?*

Damage control consisted of our soothing the callers who felt insulted by Leonard's hanging up on them while they were still talking; comforting a lady who called in tears, saying that Leonard had been rude to her and hurt her feelings; or if he had words with someone on the phone, he would pass the chore to one of us to "fix it" and we would be left to discover what that was all about. I know he feels he can say and do anything and get it out of his system because he says he holds nothing inside. Then he forgets about it and expects others to understand. That's why he feels he doesn't have to apologize. Yet, he is so easily offended himself, and not at all understanding of others if they "don't hold anything inside." He is super protective of his own reputation while appearing to take pleasure in wounding the reputations of others. He expects 100% loyalty from his friends and co-workers in spite of maltreatment, but in the face of reproach—no matter how minor—he becomes their enemy. No wonder he has no peace and complained that he has sleepless nights.

Appointments: Leonard's day ended at 4:45 and this was his sacred time when he listened to the news. I don't fault him for that, but one afternoon I dared to disturb him when a lady called who had made a 4:30 appointment. Traffic problems had made her late. She apologized and asked if she could still come to the office. Leonard refused to see her—this despite Leonard's constant reminders to us that every call and every appointment was vitally important because these people could change their minds and give their money to another ministry if not served immediately. This illustrates the double standard at the office—one for him, another for us.

On another occasion, an elderly couple showed up for an appointment and Leonard and Rita were out of the office. As usual, they had not told us where they would be, nor how

long they would be gone. (Later, Rita confessed that she suddenly remembered the appointment half way through lunch in a restaurant.) Seldom did they take their cell phone, but hoping against hope, Trenton called Rita's cell phone number. Wouldn't you know—the answering ring came from her bedroom! What to do??? I invited them to sit at the dining table and the lady was plainly irritated about the delay. But I tried to assure them of the Westphal's soon return. To distract them, I led them into talking about themselves. After perhaps 40 minutes, the Westphals returned just as the couple got to the best part of the romance that led up to their wedding. As the Westphals blew in profuse with loud apologies, the couple ignored the interruption and finished their story. The point: If the Westphals at least kept their cell phone with them, they could be reached in an emergency—especially when Leonard made so much over not missing a single opportunity to accommodate a supporter.

Non-employee abuse: One more story: I came to work one morning, and as I opened the door I heard shouting. It was "Elder" Westphal, the former pastor who spoke so proudly of his "40 years in the ministry". Sitting at the dining table with him was Flores, the Mexican contractor who had been engaged to add two offices to the house. L.W. had been so impressed by Flores' good work that, as the addition neared completion, L.W. employed him to do some repair work on his rental property in Camarillo. Flores had given him an estimate, but when he discovered severe mold accumulation, he ran out of money for supplies. The job was taking longer than anticipated and Leonard had promised to pay his motel expenses. Now Flores was trying to explain why he had to have more money to continue to pay his crew and for supplies. But Flores' explanation was drowned out by L.W. screaming—yes, *screaming*, "You told me it would cost \$\$ and I will not pay you more! Over and over he screamed as he flailed his arms. We looked on—shocked! Was he going to strike the poor man? Gentle Flores never raised his voice and finally left, unharmed. The next day L.W. learned that Flores was in the hospital with a bleeding ulcer, so he asked me to call Flores and express our concern—and *invite him to church!* Flores was a gentleman, and we loved him. He had even responded to an invitation to visit our church on an earlier occasion. He appreciated my call and was so gracious I wanted to weep.

Now, note the contradiction in character: Shortly thereafter, L.W. called the city and a code officer (I think he was) came out to inspect the progress on the finishing touches of the addition. The only worker that Flores could spare was doing his best when the code officer showed up. L.W. pointed out and made much of the few minor touches remaining to be done, including the dirt that had been replaced after laying the water pipes, but had settled an inch or so below the surface level—as replaced dirt always does. With each item L.W. pointed out, the code officer issued a tongue lashing to the poor worker. The worker was an old man whom we had watched laboring in the sun to dig those 4 ft. deep trenches for the water pipes. Now he was being scolded for not securing additional dirt to level the earth next to the house as well as for other failures.

I felt sick at heart for the old man and for Flores who had always been respectful and gracious to Leonard in spite of the constant nagging to finish the job even though Flores' other customers had to wait—as if *their* deadlines didn't matter. Before this incident I

heard L.W. complaining to Rita and threatening to call the city to get Flores' contracting license removed. Rita flared instantly and declared, "You'll do no such thing! You will not take that man's means of earning a living away from him!" But Rita was away when the code officer appeared and I heard later that Flores, indeed, lost his license!

It seems that all you have to do is offend L.W. on some point and he is not above doing whatever it takes to remove your livelihood--even if he has to be "creative" to do it. For instance, when we visited the office last December, we heard only praise for the staff. Both Leonard and Rita were expressing their delight and pride in Kathy for her proficiency and initiative, exclaiming over the fact that she had managed to update all the files while they were at 3ABN for a Trust Services taping! (Because of the daily workload, the only opportunity we had to "update" was when they were both away, too.) By what "creative" means was this valuable employee dismissed? I understand she caught L.W. in a lie!

Leonard repeatedly reminded us that it took six months to train new employees, yet in a moment of anger, he can fire good help on the spot! But neither he nor Rita could do the training. Since *they are both computer incompetent*, they are *completely dependent upon the staff* to train replacements. Oriana took the initiative to train herself by calling the former secretary for help since neither Leonard or Rita could train her. Then Oriana trained me and later, Trenton. It was Oriana and I who trained our replacements. We also expressed our objections to the hiring of an applicant who was not only too young but apparently high on drugs at the time. Both Leonard and Rita were going to hire her because they "felt sorry for her." Therefore, it is no special magic of Leonard's that keeps that office going. While he takes credit for its success (i.e. "They could never find another director like me"), it is the professionalism, proficiency, and commitment to excellence on the part of the staff that makes Leonard look good. *Leonard's absence from the office did not interfere with the daily work. If we had a question, we routinely consulted with the 3ABN business office, our lawyers or the bank.* Any complicated property problems were left for Leonard to handle upon his return. And for his information, we also kept a running log of the work we had done while he was gone.

When Leonard bungled, we were assigned to do damage control. In fact, sometimes he would neglect the daily routine of going through the pending files with Oriana for a week or more. Then when he would come across a case he either didn't want to deal with or *didn't know how to handle*, he would pass the file to Oriana with "You take care of it!." And I would find her sometimes with a bewildered expression exclaiming, "I don't know how to handle this and he won't tell me!" Then she would start making phone calls, using her detective instincts *to resolve the problem herself*. I took a call from a donor who complained that the sale of his property had been handled so badly that he would never work with 3ABN again. But it was Oriana who usually had to deal with the complaints of property donors. So in spite of Leonard's insistence to the contrary, Trust Services *could* survive without him and he *could* be replaced.

We extended grace to Leonard hoping for change. A year later the abuse continues. **In this matter it is absolutely necessary to have professional intervention via qualified**

investigators to resolve this crisis and to do whatever it takes to preserve the integrity of 3ABN.

I know this has been a long letter and I have prayed through numerous revisions trying to be fair. I do not write to spite the Westphals. To the contrary, I have a burden for their souls and for true Christian ethics and a spirit of harmony to pervade that office. Dear friends of mine have been hurt, and I fear for their replacements if the situation does not improve dramatically. I also fear for the eventual backlash in repercussions against the good name of 3ABN.

Jesus would not tolerate hypocrisy and he often chastised the religious leaders, but he did it in love and firmness— just as Trenton kindly but firmly reproached Leonard that morning for his cruel and insensitive remarks about my brother.

I have had to be very frank in presenting the facts, including Leonard's own words, in order to draw a clear picture of present leadership at 3ABN Trust Services. It has cost me personal suffering because it is my nature to focus on the good in people and nurture their best side. I did this with Leonard, extending grace and appealing to his strengths, but it seems to no avail. It is so sad that he is being held hostage by his own pride and competitive spirit so he has no peace.

Healing can only come as the wound is cleansed and treated properly—even though it hurts! I can only hope that I have true friends who would rather see me saved by correcting me than to keep silent and let me go on to destruction—and to hurt others along the way!

Sincerely,

Hope E. LeBrun

P.S. Since leaving Loma Linda, it has come to our attention from various sources that Leonard's characteristics are well known to many of our church leaders and laymen across the nation, not just California. He has apparently left fall-out wherever he has worked. While these people approve of 3ABN, they have no respect for Leonard. Will that disrespect carry over to 3ABN for not having the moral courage to "clean house?"

P.P.S. We just learned that the Florida office has been closed and Trenton and Oriana have been terminated because of "the lack of amiable working conditions between the two offices!" Leonard has won again! But in spite of all Leonard has done to sabotage the Florida office, it has brought in well over \$800,000 in just the first year-- and in some instances the Frosts have recovered the good will and support that Leonard had lost for 3ABN! Wait for the backlash of protests from the supporters who have regained confidence in 3ABN because of Trenton and Oriana's faithful Christian witness! Now, like Flores, because of Leonard's vindictiveness, Oriana and Trenton have lost their

livelihood and are still too young for retirement income. This scenario reminds me of the story of Mordicai and Hamen. Justice was served when Hamen was hung on the gallows he built for Mordicai. I wonder how Leonard would feel to be instantly fired and the Frosts re-instated? At least the Westphals would survive on their other income, but the Frosts *have no other income*.