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BlackSDA _ 3ABN _ Could I Have Been A Victim Of Tommy Shelton?

Posted by: PJMusic Feb 19 2007, 09:17 PM

First of all, I want to say how difficult it is to type this. I have been friends with Tommy's kids for a very long time. They are wonderful kids and I really feel sorry for them for all that they are having to go through. I have nothing to gain by writing this, but feel I should, as I was part of the Ezra congregation and my family was impacted by this as well. Some of you on this board don't believe what has happened, but I can tell you that as a teenager who was in this church, and what I was able to see, there is truth to these allegations.

I first started attending Ezra Church of God in 1974. I remember Tommy Shelton coming to my house and inviting my family to church. I was outside playing when this happened. From then, until 1987 I attended the church, except for about a span of a year or so between that time, during the mid-80's when the scandal hit.

I started attending the Ezra Church of God Christian School when I was 13. I was a classmate of Brad Dunning, Duane, Roger, Scott, Ricky, Greg, etc. These guys were my friends also, as we played basketball together, sang together, etc. I knew Ricky since he was about 5 or 6. Greg was one of my best friends.

I also recall the day when Brad stopped going to the school. Around this time I had heard rumors of what might be happening.

I watched as the split of the church took place in mid-80's and watched as my family was shunned by the church as they had sided with the few who believed the accusations were true. Many mean things came my family's way after all this happened. My family was friends with Sherry and others who were against Tommy. We had stopped attending the church for a time, although I myself went back, because of my involvement with different parts of the church at that time, like music and I lived with a family that attended the church as well. I remember well the "nervous breakdown" Tommy had. I also watched as certain teen guys seemed to always be with him, driving with him, pulling up in the same vehicle with him. I would watch as they would just follow behind and go straight back to Tommy's office before evening church service would begin. I even remember the song Tommy wrote during this breakdown called Sometimes I Just Want to go Home. I even remember the lyrics.

For some unknown reason in around 1984 or 85, Tommy bought me a new pair of black shoes. I remember us going up to Payless to get them. I felt good wearing them, because my other shoes were not that great and getting new shoes for me was really unaffordable with me family.

I have been on a trip to a music studio in Flora. I also was offered to drive but declined as I didn't feel comfortable. I remember being at the studio. (Their fridge only had TAB soda). For some reason, I was allowed to miss school to go on this trip.

On the drive back, Tommy asked me a strange question. He asked me if I wanted to ask him some personal questions. This made me feel quite uncomfortable, even at that age. I was not close to anyone, even my parents, so right away did not feel right even saying anything personal. The best thing I could come up with was "Do you think it's ok to have a girlfriend?". After his quick explanation of if it was ok (can't remember the answer), he pressed me once more for personal questions, which I had none I wanted to ask. It just all seemed awkward to me.

I have thus far never spoken of what I am about to write to anyone, but in light of what has come up, I feel I had to bring it up. I didn't feel comfortable discussing that type of thing back then so I remained quiet. I did not want confrontation.

I myself was never a victim. However I was told by one of the guys who has not come forward of what had happened to him. He told me once about something Tommy says to help gain trust. It's a story of David and Jonathan, and how the bible talks about a "special love" between them. Tommy then compares this to him and this guy. He then tells me that after that, Tommy asks for this guy to do something for him. This all took place in the mid 80's, when I was about 15 or 16. I won't go in detail as to what was asked and done further to him, but it is along the lines of Duane's letter.

I am not sure why I stayed with Ezra even after my family left due to the scandal that started. My own family was disappointed in me when they found out that I had started attending there again. I already knew the things against Tommy at this time, but still I stayed, maybe feeling that as long as it never happened to me, then it's ok. The only friends I ever knew attended there. Without going there, I had no friends. I had always had this jealousy at the time that I was never included in anything that the other guys had, like being asked to sing, or participate in things. Maybe it was because I didn't sing good. I played piano, which ironically was inspired to me by Tommy.

As for Danny, well I can only give personal views on him. I didn't really care to much for him, as he did construction on the school and would play basketball with the team during P.E. He was a good shooter though but on a personal level, well he seemed quite demanding and cocky.

I really don't know what to think about all this. Some relief perhaps as I know of victims who have not come forward, many who were my friends. I only hope that something finally gets done so there can be some closure.

I am not religious, and as of now have not intention of being religious, although I have some values. My mind is always in gospel music even though I could never live that lifestyle. But I do hope that the right thing is done. I truly feel that I could have been a victim because there are similarities as to what favors were done for me to gain trust that had also happened to my friends. Tommy is a very convincing individual and knows how to gain trust. As ne who once attended Ezra and a friend of these victims from Ezra, we do need closure.

Posted by: wwjd Feb 19 2007, 09:24 PM

QUOTE(PJMusic @ Feb 19 2007, 09:17 PM)

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I can't imagine who told you that you would receive closure by posting on the internet. This site only brings contention and separation. The allegations against 3abn are not true but the people involved will use anything and anyone to bring it down. I am sorry if you were told that posting here will resolve anything. It won't.

Posted by: lookin4truth Feb 19 2007, 09:28 PM

QUOTE(wwjd @ Feb 19 2007, 10:24 PM)

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it down.

WWJD,

I am not trying to give you a hard time. I was just wondering why you would read this letter, and then say that the allegations against 3ABN are not true.

You did not say the allegations against Tommy are not true, and that is what this post was all about.

Posted by: Richard Sherwin Feb 19 2007, 09:28 PM

Welcome PJMusic to BSDA. There is much to be gained from writing things down and getting things off your chest. Hopefully you will be made welcome here, despite a few of those that will put you down.

Richard

QUOTE(PJMusic @ Feb 19 2007, 10:17 PM) □

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Posted by: wwjd Feb 19 2007, 09:33 PM

QUOTE(lookin4truth @ Feb 19 2007, 09:28 PM)

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then say that the allegations against 3ABN are not true.

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Because unlike others here, I don't comment on things that I don't know the actual facts or details involved. I do know about many of the false accusations thrown at 3abn because, under the circumstances, I have made it my business to know.

Posted by: PJMusic Feb 19 2007, 09:35 PM

WWJD,

Honestly, I really don't care about 3ABN. Sure I've been there when it first started, but I really only watch because I see people on there I know personally, people I grew up with, and can tell my wife and show her that I know them. I even wrote a song once that someone sang on there. However, this was not about 3ABN though thus the topic.

Posted by: IMM Feb 19 2007, 09:35 PM

Welcome, PJMusic. Telling your story must have taken a lot of courage.

QUOTE(wwjd @ Feb 19 2007, 09:24 PM) □

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edited for content..... not appropriate.....

WWJD, if you are not a victim, a parent of a victim, or a professional counselor, how can you decide what will bring closure to someone else?

Posted by: Rosyroi Feb 19 2007, 09:45 PM

QUOTE(PJMusic @ Feb 19 2007, 07:17 PM) □

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Thank you for posting in BSDA. Welcome



Thank you for your story. You are very brave for comming forth to give your TRUTH story. You don't have to be religious to have a close communion with Jesus. HE is still guiding you with your love for gospel music. Carry on. I will be praying for you.
Rosyroi

Posted by: roxe Feb 19 2007, 09:46 PM

Welcome to BSDA, PJMusic!!

thank you for your courage in telling your story... and even tho you say you could have been a victim, it appears to me that you are a "verbal" victim... praise the Lord it wasn't worse for you.

IMO, you don't need to answer anyone who makes you feel uncomfortable... your story speaks for itself.

God Bless!

Posted by: Rosyroi Feb 19 2007, 09:54 PM

QUOTE(wwjd @ Feb 19 2007, 07:24 PM)

I can't imagine who told you that you would receive closure by posting on the internet.

edited for content..... not appropriate.....

Why should I not be surprised. I imagine Jesus crying over that post. Because I am.
Rosyroi

Posted by: watchbird Feb 19 2007, 10:00 PM

QUOTE(PJMusic @ Feb 19 2007, 10:17 PM) □

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Blessings on you PJM for bringing your experience, your confirmation of the experiences of others, and most of all your own need for closure and community to us here on BSDA.

I know feelings similar to yours, as I too sometimes wonder how it was.... in a place and time far removed from yours.... that I escaped without becoming a victim as I learned years later some of my friends had been by a certain sexual predator. There is a feeling of wonderment that still haunts me when I think about it... when I look back and see new meaning in old experiences that either completely baffled me at the time or that I realized years later I had completely misread at the time.

How fortunate I was... how fortunate you are... to have been protected even when you were not fully aware of being so protected. And how fortunate your friends are now that you have stepped up to stand beside them affirming their experiences as you have done.

Surely.... as one gives, so shall it be given to him again... and in your attempts here to help bring closure to your friends who were more directly victimized than you, you, yourself, will indeed be blessed and will find closure for your own wounds of the spirit and psyche.

As you may have already seen, there are those here who will harrass and speak ill of you. But by doing so, they also will come under the law of "as one gives, so shall it be given to him again", and those who give such taunts and barbs as some pass out, will indeed receive as they have given, and by stepping forward as you have, you will help them reveal the kinds of persons which they are.... and this also will help bring closure to the victims as their abusers are stripped of their false facades and stand revealed for what they are.

Blessings upon you, may God give you peace, and may He draw you to Himself through this new experience of fellowshipping with those who are working to expose evil and bring deliverance to the abused and oppressed.

Once upon a time.

At a different place
And in a different age
I scattered words
Upon a page . . .

Lest I forget . . .

To rage


Against the falling
Of a blade.

About that other time
And need,
From scattered words
Upon the page
I read . . .

Lest I forget . . .


To bleed

With you
Whose wounds
Are not on view . . .
With you . . .
The walking
Wounded.

May your sojourn with us here bring peace and healing for the wounds you and your friends have held out of sight all these many years..... 

Posted by: roxe Feb 19 2007, 10:02 PM

edited post...

i refuse to get caught up in 

Posted by: IMM Feb 19 2007, 10:03 PM

WB, that was touching. Thanks for sharing it.

Posted by: roxe Feb 19 2007, 10:08 PM

QUOTE(IMM @ Feb 19 2007, 09:03 PM)

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Posted by: erik Feb 19 2007, 11:02 PM

QUOTE(PJMusic @ Feb 19 2007, 07:17 PM) □

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Thank you for having the courage to stand up and tell the truth.

I am proud of you, and will pray that you and your friends will find the healing you need.

Erik

QUOTE(wwjd @ Feb 19 2007, 07:24 PM) □

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WWJD,

SO are calling this guy a liar?

If so what Proof do you have that he is lying?

THE problem for 3abn is this WWJD, tommy problem is now their problem because they defended him with out knowing all the facts.

If the charges that these young men are bring forward have no truth to them why in Tommy and carol's letters do neither of them list the guys names and say that they are lying, instead they went after a fellow pastor?

Just give some answer and thought to these questions?

Erik

Posted by: Ralph Feb 20 2007, 12:04 AM

QUOTE(PJMusic @ Feb 19 2007, 08:17 PM) □

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Thanks so much for writing. Sometimes thoughts are like fog around us and when we write, that fog is condensed into words that we can see and deal with. Just writing often gives a sense of peace. For a while you may wonder if it was worth it. Let me assure that it certainly was. And I hope that your willingness to write will give others the courage to speak out. There is healing in talking about these things.

I have often noticed that people look at youthful experiences through the eyes of an adult and wonder, why didn't I do this? or why didn't I say that? If any readers feel that way, just look at a youth that was your age, and ask yourself whether he would do any differently than you did at that age.

It wasn't until the last few years that we realized how traumatic such an experience can be for an adolescent.

I just pray that God will put His arms of love around you and give you the peace and the closure that you are seeking.

Posted by: Grace Feb 20 2007, 03:25 AM

QUOTE(Ralph @ Feb 20 2007, 07:04 AM) □

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Amen!

Posted by: Snoopy Feb 20 2007, 09:57 AM

QUOTE(wwjd @ Feb 19 2007, 09:24 PM) □

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 I'm sorry, WWJD, but I am angered by your post and fail to see any connection at all between what you said here and what MY Jesus would do. Your tone is very condescending and disrespectful, and implies that PJMusic must be told what to do, unable to make his own choices. How do you know what his post might have resolved for him? You don't!!! Although Jesus does.

I came to BSDA with no preconceived ideas, but your attitude is certainly helping me to lean in a particular direction... Sorry, but I think I may need to go and pray again today for God to help me deal with attitudes like yours...

 I'm now officially disgusted. 

BTW, thank you, PJMusic for having the courage to share your experience. Please don't ever lose sight of Jesus, and remember, there is a HUGE difference between being religious and being spiritual.

God bless you, your family and friends.  sig

Posted by: ex3ABNemployee Feb 20 2007, 10:59 AM

QUOTE(PJMusic @ Feb 19 2007, 09:17 PM) □

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And this, ladies and gentlemen, is a first hand account of the damage this has done to someone who

wasn't even directly affected. This is more far reaching than any of us realize, I believe.

PJMusic, thank you for your post. Yes, I think you could have (and would have) been a victim. Actually, in a way, you ARE a victim. I believe I know who you are. Feel free to PM me if you'd like to talk. I'm not interested in religion, either. (See my signature) It took years for me to realize that a relationship with Jesus is not about "do"s and "don't"s. It's about simply trusting in Him and letting Him lead. Don't feel like you can never be right with God because you can't "follow the rules."

I'd love to hear from you. It may take me a while to respond because I'll be on the road a lot this week but I WILL write back.

Posted by: princessdi Feb 20 2007, 11:26 AM

QUOTE

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You lack sufficient evidence or qualifications to make this determination.

QUOTE

This site only brings contention and separation.

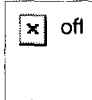
Yet, I have been gone for 5 days, and you are still here. If you believe this to be the case.....be gone!

QUOTE

The allegations against 3abn are not true but the people involved will use anything and anyone to bring it down.

This letter is not about 3ABN, but about Tommy Shelton, to my knowledge they are not one in the same. If you have no answer, question or comment to make on the allegations, or better yet this specific allegation you should not have posted to this thread. You only allowed the enemy to you use

you to discourage. Basically, you post is



QUOTE

I am sorry if you were told that posting here will resolve anything. It won't.

Once again.....be gone!

Posted by: Aunt B Feb 20 2007, 11:29 AM

Thank you for coming forward and speaking out PJM, and



to BSDA.

While there are a few here who are critical, there are many more who will be supportive and stand beside you. I'm sure that the friends you have mentioned (who have come forward as victims of TS) appreciate your support as well.

God bless you, and I pray that you see Jesus here, in at least some of us.

Aunt B

Posted by: Noahswife Feb 20 2007, 11:34 AM

Does anyone else find it chilling that not only was a pastor involved and abusing his position of trust but that he used a biblical story to gain confidence and achieve his goals?

If find this even more upsetting if that is possible.

nw

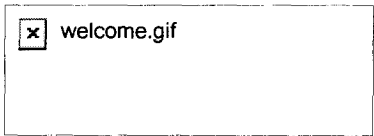
I add my heartfelt support and prayers to all the others, PJM.

Posted by: seraph|m Feb 20 2007, 12:11 PM

QUOTE(PJMusic @ Feb 19 2007, 10:17 PM) □

First of all,I want to say how difficult it is to type this.

I am not religious, and as of now have not intention of being religious, although I have some values. My mind is always in gospel music even though I could never live that lifestyle. But I do hope that the right thing is done. I truly feel that I could have been a victim because there are similarities as to what favors were done for me to gain trust that had also happened to my friends. Tommy is a very convincing individual and knows how to gain trust. As ne who once attended Ezra and a friend of these victims from Ezra, we do need closure.



Bless you PJMusic and

It is truly unfortunate that so many lives have been tragically altered by the behavior of a few, in comparison. We can only pray that the Lord will give you and the many other victims strength and peace.

The fact that you had personal contact with the one who victimized others, the fact that you were placed in a position to be alone with this person and made to feel uncomfortable, the fact that all your lives, your families, and your friends, were altered by the events of your childhood makes it clear that you are also a victims.

Please consider however that we can thank the Lord Jesus that none of you have to stay victims. We praise the Lord Jesus, with and for you, that He has given you the strength and courage to speak up. Also please know that religion is not what God wants us to experience. It is "relationship" that He desires, for and with us. You, and all of the other brave souls who have spoken up, are closer to the Lord then any who has never known what it is like to be a victim of abuse.

Be Blessed and Safe in the arms of Jesus,

Mrs. Josey aka Sera/Eze 3:18

Posted by: PrincessDrRe Feb 20 2007, 12:25 PM

QUOTE(wwjd @ Feb 19 2007, 11:24 PM) □

I can't imagine who told you that you would receive closure by posting on the internet. This site only brings contention and separation. The allegations against 3abn are not true but the people involved will use anything and anyone to bring it down. I am sorry if you were told that posting here will resolve anything. It won't.

QUOTE(wwjd @ Feb 19 2007, 11:33 PM) □

Because unlike others here, I don't comment on things that I don't know the actual facts or details involved. I do know about many of the false accusations thrown at 3abn because, under the circumstances, I have made it my business to know.

1. The OP may be under the "3ABN" title threads - but is not about 3ABN; this single thread is about Tommy Shelton and questions the OP had in regards to being a victim of Tommy Shelton.

Now.

You cannot tell someone what they feel, their motives for posting, or how/if it will resolve anything or not. This is not why the OP posted. The church (as a whole - SDA's & Others...) does enough condemnation of people. ...and then you - come on the internet - on a website - where someone is posting and actually asking a question - and come out sounding very much like...well.... ignorant. That's the nicest way I could say it on this thread/board. I wanted to say it another way..... but you know what you are when you act this way.

2. The more you speak - the more you actually "help" Tommy, Danny, and the "camp" look worse. It's beyond sad that you could come at someone that is "new" to the board - who is asking questions - like this.

3. Per Jesus and the way we are suppose to act - you....cannot possibly be serious about the way you treat people on this board. You do this as a "fun" act. or...as I said prior.... you are diagnosable. I now lean towards the latter - this one in fact. That you have some.... *some* mental psychosis that causes you to lash out at other...those of which you are not familiar with. Those that ask for help.

I have run into others like you. Those that actually "take pleasure" in hitting someone when they are down. Those that have no remorse. Those that have a gall-filled soul.

....and this is sad indeed.

Posted by: PJMusic Feb 20 2007, 12:26 PM

Thank you all for the support.

I believe part of the reason I am torn between this whole thing also, is because I play piano, and my inspiration at the time I started playing was because of Tommy. He has also given me tips and pointers on how to play. Even my style of playing is similar to his. I learned by watching him play. I guess maybe that is why also I felt that as long as none of this happened to me firsthand, then I was "safe". Even after knowing that all this was happening, I still visited Tommy and his family in 1997. Never did I bring anything like this up, but I had known all this time what had happened. I guess I was the type that wanted to get along with everyone, but deep down I somehow wanted

some type of "justice".

Speaking from the heart, I am no Christian, and I as of now it is not my plan to be. Unfortunately I had seen that being associated with such seems to show how scandalous things can be. I am more concerned for the friends I had back in West Frankfort and how they are affected. I am sorry for them and I hope that they are able to work their way through this.

I'm not going to pass judgement on Tommy and give my thoughts on what I feel should be done, but I do hope that justice will be served. My friends were hurt. And there are more victims that I know of that will probably not come forward probably due to embarrassment or maybe just wanting this all to pass without them. I just hope this issue can be pursued.


Posted by: PrincessDrRe Feb 20 2007, 12:28 PM

QUOTE(IMM @ Feb 19 2007, 11:35 PM)

WWJD, if you are not a victim, a parent of a victim, or a professional counselor, how can you decide what will bring closure to someone else?

I also agree.

Even a professional counselor/therapist (**which I am**) cannot tell someone what closure they will get or what they will feel.

The nerve. The gall. 

That is beyond sad....it's actually asinine.....

<http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/asinine><<<---Click Here!!!

Main Entry: as·i·nine

Pronunciation: 'a-s&-"nIn

Function: adjective

Etymology: Latin asininus, from asinus ass

1 : extremely or utterly foolish <an asinine excuse>

2 : of, relating to, or resembling an ass

synonym see SIMPLE

- as·i·nine·ly adverb

- as·i·nin·i·ty /"a-s&-'ni-n&-tE/ noun

Posted by: SoulEspresso Feb 20 2007, 11:25 PM

QUOTE(PJMusic @ Feb 20 2007, 12:26 PM)

Thank you all for the support. ...I'm not going to pass judgement on Tommy and give my thoughts on what I feel should be done, but I do hope that justice will be served. My friends were hurt. And there are more victims that I know of that will probably not come forward probably due to embarrassment or maybe just wanting this all to pass without them. I just hope this issue can be pursued.

You could have been a victim, no doubt about it. And since I had a strange experience akin to this

back in college, I can say you have some real guts to post this. Thank you--the more people that come forward, the easier it will be for others. Then maybe Danny, Tommy & Co will start coughing up some answers.

This person could stand to cough up some answers:

QUOTE(wwjd @ Feb 19 2007, 09:24 PM)

I can't imagine who told you that you would receive closure by posting on the internet. This site only brings contention and separation. The allegations against 3abn are not true but the people involved will use anything and anyone to bring it down. I am sorry if you were told that posting here will resolve anything. It won't.

Well, wwjd, if you're wondering where the contention is coming from ...

QUOTE(wwjd @ Feb 19 2007, 09:33 PM)

Because unlike others here, I don't comment on things that I don't know the actual facts or details involved. I do know about many of the false accusations thrown at 3abn because, under the circumstances, I have made it my business to know.

What are you doing **right in these posts**? Could you *possibly* be commenting on things you know nothing about--like PJMusic's experience? What do you know about that? Were you ever victimized by anyone? How would you know? Oh--maybe you don't?

And if you know so much about what's going on behind the scenes, where's the documentation?

Here we have an eyewitness account of some weird junk going on, elsewhere we have experiences of full-fledged victims, and so far, all we've got from you or anyone else at 3ABN (who are you really?) is dissembling and denial. (And I count the recent additions from Tommy and Carol.)

Put up or shut up, wwjd. Potshots at people who have been hurt is not a good way to make nice with this board you find so contentious.

Posted by: Ralph Feb 21 2007, 03:53 PM

QUOTE(PJMusic @ Feb 20 2007, 11:26 AM)

Thank you all for the support.

I believe part of the reason I am torn between this whole thing also, is because I play piano, and my inspiration at the time I started playing was because of Tommy. He has also given me tips and pointers on how to play. Even my style of playing is similar to his. I learned by watching him play. I guess maybe that is why also I felt that as long as none of this happened to me firsthand, then I was "safe". Even after knowing that all this was happening, I still visited Tommy and his family in 1997. Never did I bring anything like this up, but I had known all this time what had happened. I guess I was the type that wanted to get along with everyone, but deep down I somehow wanted some type of "justice".

Speaking from the heart, I am no Christian, and I as of now it is not my plan to be. Unfortunately I had seen that being associated with such seems to show how scandalous things can be. I am more concerned for the friends I had back in West Frankfort and how they are affected. I am sorry for

them and I hope that they are able to work their way through this. I'm not going to pass judgement on Tommy and give my thoughts on what I feel should be done, but I do hope that justice will be served. My friends were hurt. And there are more victims that I know of that will probably not come forward probably due to embarrassment or maybe just wanting this all to pass without them. I just hope this issue can be pursued.

Your post brought into focus a problem that I had realized, but had never put into words. If I read correctly, you are asking, Is it possible for me to separate the good things that I really appreciate from the bad things that I know about a person -- or must I throw the good out with the bad?

Cognitively, we know the answer, but emotionally, we find it more difficult to make this split, for emotionally we see a person as a whole, and find it difficult to say that one part is very good and one part is very bad.

Could it be that you are also concerned about the fallout from associating with him? Could you be asking, will people who see me play the piano recognize that style, and will they associate me with my teacher in a negative way?

I know that I am on thin ice here, so would appreciate feedback from both PJMusic and from the people who understand psychology far better than I do.

Posted by: PJMusic Feb 21 2007, 05:04 PM

QUOTE(Ralph @ Feb 21 2007, 01:53 PM) □

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Could it be that you are also concerned about the fallout from associating with him? Could you be asking, will people who see me play the piano recognize that style, and will they associate me with my teacher in a negative way?

I know that I am on thin ice here, so would appreciate feedback from both PJMusic and from the people who understand psychology far better than I do.

I honestly don't know how to answer this. Perhaps part of what I see is guilt because I carried alot of this in me, and although I have gotten along with Tommy Shelton's family, I feel I had to post because otherwise I'd be hiding something. I feel guilty in a way because of the time spent on me to play piano, the encouragement of playing for the church, etc. Yet all along I knew what had been done to my friends.

It bothered me that Tommy was the pastor of the church I grew up in in my childhood and teenage years, this same church that helped teach me values I have, knowledge of the bible, the path of almost being a preacher or musician. And this church also could have done something then.

The memories I have of singing in the group I was in, being in the school that was part of the church, is all now marred by these things coming out. I know it should have long ago.

Had all this happened to me as a direct victim, I probably would not have said anything, either from embarrassment, or for not being included in further church activities. I was so jealous of the other guys getting to be involved in so much, being allowed to sing. I remember the hurt I felt when the

quartet I sang in, sang as a trio instead while I watched from the audience, excluding me. I was just not good enough. I cannot fathom how I can be blessed in a sermon by a person who did evil things. So parts of me are angry, parts guilty, parts hurt. I turned my back on God when I saw things didn't work out for me the way I hoped. And I believe all this stemmed from this issue in some way. It's not blame, it's just the way I see it. I have kept the bitterness since then. Maybe it was well founded because of how the pastor, leaders and people I was to look up to, did not help when they should have. Sure their hindsight might see how they should have reacted, but as Tommy once told me when I was scolded in school "The damage cannot be undone".

I can no longer believe in the common phrases of "everything happens for a reason", or "God works in mysterious ways", and other little catchphrases that churches use to help try to ease suffering. It angers me that this is the best type of advice that I can ever hear. If I had a choice, I wish I never believed, but unfortunately I have to believe. The church and pastor I was in made sure of that.

Posted by: seraph|m Feb 21 2007, 05:32 PM

PJM,

Bear in mind that the gift you have, regardless of what person may have played a part in your interest it playing, it is a God given gift. PJM, It was God, not Tommy Shelton, who gave you the strength to push on and persevere despite the circumstances.

It was the actions of the Pastor, who was supposed to help teach you to guarding the avenues of your soul, that instilled fear and guilt in you while the Lord helped you to become the person who was able to speak the truth about what you experienced, so others might know that they are not alone. Tommy did not do that for you, God did. In spite of what help he may have given you or what was done to gain your trust, the fact is all good things come from God. God can use people to help others, in spite of themselves.

Seeing that all good things come from God keep this in mind, satan knows the PR game bro. and he is the master of lies. Satan has had thousands of years to perfect his art of manipulation. It is God who is to be acknowledged for the gifts and any other good thing that has come into your life.

Be Blessed

Posted by: Ralph Feb 21 2007, 06:06 PM

QUOTE(PJMusic @ Feb 21 2007, 04:04 PM)

I honestly don't know how to answer this.

You did a wonderful job of answering it. Thanks so much for sharing this with us. I can only imagine what you are going through as you write. You mention the anger, the guilt and the hurt. I just wish we could talk and weep together.

I have no platitudes to offer. Like you, I find them hollow. Please continue to talk over these things.

You've heard it before, but I want to say it again, *It's not your fault.* **It's not your fault .**
It's not your fault.

Posted by: JustTana Feb 21 2007, 06:28 PM

Dear PJMusic:

Please know that your musicality is truly a gift from God. Thank you for giving Tommy credit for how he helped you with it, but that in NO WAY makes you a part of his sins. And I, too, am very glad that you were spared the pain of physical abuse by Tommy. The emotional abuse you endured in feeling sorrow for your friends who went through it was traumatic enough. I do not blame you for not speaking out either to your parents or to your friends. Again, you are not responsible for what happened to them. The fault lie squarely in Tommy's lap.

I know how you feel. I was raped by a family member (not my father!) when I was nine years old and never said a word about it because I felt that maybe I was partly responsible for what happened. We were very poor at the time and he offered me candy if my memory serves me. I know now that this person was jealous of me from the time I was born and he took it out on me - he was very sly because he knew the trouble he would get in if the 'powers that be' found out what he was doing. He had been punished in the past and blamed me for it.

Now, a question for everybody else: In light of the Oprah Show today and the mention of the fear that is put into victims more often than not - What dire consequences might Tommy have threatened those little boys with which allowed them to stay quiet - Oh, that's right! CAROL might KILL HERSELF and it will be YOUR FAULT! And there probably were other threats as well. . . .

Just a thought!

JT

Posted by: PeacefullyBewildered Feb 21 2007, 08:25 PM

QUOTE(PJMusic @ Feb 21 2007, 04:04 PM) □

I can no longer believe in the common phrases of "everything happens for a reason", or "God works in mysterious ways", and other little catchphrases that churches use to help try to ease suffering. It angers me that this is the best type of advice that I can ever hear. If I had a choice, I wish I never believed, but unfortunately I have to believe. The church and pastor I was in made sure of that.

PJMusic,

I can understand your bitterness and how what you have gone through has sullied your outlook on your past life experiences. The tendrils of sin touch far more than those in its immediate grip. The actions of the sinner are far reaching, far greater than the one committing the sin realizes or grasps. Satan understands this oh, so well and I imagine chortles with glee when one submits to his plans.

The common phrases you mentioned can feel not like words of encouragement but rather like attempts at minimizing the gravity of the experience or victimization. This is typical of the impotency of the denial that often surrounds situations such as this.

It certainly does not bring hope and healing to think that God would allow such things to happen for a reason! The truth is that Satan is behind all of this sin and suffering and hopelessness. The only silver lining I can offer, as one who was victimized, is that after sin has rampaged through your life due to the choices of one under Satan's spell, God can pick you up and help you to use the experience to benefit yourself and others.

There will come a point in Earth's history when all will see clearly the father of all lies and all suffering. And there will be no more of either!



Posted by: PrincessDrRe Feb 21 2007, 09:36 PM



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