



***An Attempt to Mend a Broken Network
& Save the Cause of Christ from Reproach***

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Seeking Verification About

The Tommy Shelton Child Molestation Allegations

As Requested by Dr. Walt Thompson

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On November 27, 2006, Dr. Walt Thompson cited Danny Shelton as the only named source for certain erroneous information about the Tommy Shelton child molestation allegations. Walt closed his email with a request to Bob to verify that information, a request that came after Walt's being put on notice that these communications would not be kept confidential.

This was the first attempt to verify Walt's information, as well as clarify other details concerning the Tommy Shelton child molestation allegations.

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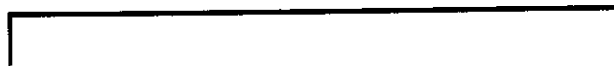
----- Original Message -----

From: Bob
To: Danny Shelton
CC: Walt Thompson, Elder Ken Denslow
Subject: Verification needed for Walt Thompson's statements.
Date: Wed, 29 Nov 2006 09:34:09 -0600

Greetings, Danny.

My apologies for bothering you, but Dr. Thompson suggested that I verify what he told me, and based on his communications I don't know of any other way to approach this than to ask you five questions.

You may remember that after you contacted me last Thursday I asked you a few questions. In answer to those questions Walt wrote:



Walt Admits: No
Evidence

Added on 3/16/2007
Pregnancy Test

Added on 3/15/2007
Dan & Brandy
Abused You?

Must Read:
Mom in Pain #1

"The allegations against Tommy were made about 30 years ago. They were reported to the proper authorities. No physical actions ever occurred. Tommy apologized to the kids and offered recompense."

This information was superb, for it was just the kind that could be used to answer the critics, especially if it came from both sides: No new allegations of child molestation in the last 30 years, and Tommy apologized for some unspecified thing that didn't involve physical actions.

The difficulty, though, is that according to the 2003 letter that Walt received, Tommy has not yet apologized, and there are additional allegations from as recent as the late 1990's in Virginia. These two points are clearly indicated by the Action Items attached to that letter. The question then arose: Did Walt contact the alleged victims, their families, and the two ministerial licensing associations as invited to do so in that 2003 letter to get their side of the story? His reply was as follows:

"As I recall the events of 2003, I received a call from Brad Thorp from the General Conference telling me of Pastor Dryden's accusations. Brad appropriately told me that it was not his concern, and that it was ours to handle. As I recall, I contacted Pastor Dryden and heard his side of the story following which I received the letter that is circulating. I was at 3abn at the time and spoke at length with Danny about the matter. He shared with me the details as he understood them. Whether or not I was aware of what generated the letter at that time, I do not remember. Based upon my understanding that Dryden had had a long standing feud with Tommy over factors unrelated to the above

accusations, it did not seem indicated to approach the boys in question directly, having been informed that no case had ever been filed with the courts or legal disposition made."

I was chatting with a pastor's wife Sabbath before last about this, and she told me something I had never heard before, based on her experience as a social worker. While social workers may be able to get enough evidence of molestation to warrant removing a child, the burden of proof for that is different than for criminal convictions, and thus many cases that social workers act on never have charges filed in them. It was her recommendation that whenever background checks are in order, that social services be contacted as well as the court system, since they know more. Thus it is a fallacy to think that just because no case was filed that there are no grounds for further investigation.

At any rate, according to the above, Walt did not contact the alleged victims, their families, or the licensing associations as invited to do so, and instead got his information about no new allegations for 30 years and Tommy's apologies solely from you. The difficulty is that, besides this information contradicting the 2003 letter, it also appears to conflict with the testimony of the alleged victims and the other parties.

This whole situation puts Walt in an awkward light, for he has repeatedly been accused of only getting your side of the story rather than of fairly weighing both sides of a given issue. On the face of it, just looking at appearances, it appears that he was misled on this one.

I will quickly add that I am more than willing to entertain the possibility that you were misled as well by your sources regarding how recent the most recent allegations really were, and whether Tommy apologized. Thus,

Question 1: Can you give me any information that would help me out on this, such as the specific sources of the information you gave Walt in 2003, and ways that I can verify that information in order to establish that all these alleged victims, their families, and the two associations are

incorrect?

It appears fair to say that there was a serious error of judgment here when these other parties were not contacted as suggested. Since the 2003 letter specifically asked Tommy to apologize for "deceit," for Walt to put so much weight on his and his brother's side of the story was unwise, if nothing else, for appearance's sake. Plus, it lends support to the idea that Walt has on other issues not fairly weighed both sides of an issue. But I do not wish to criticize him too much, for we all make mistakes, even when we are doing our very best. I certainly have.

And it also appears unwise on your part to not insist that Walt make a thorough investigation of the matter, especially since you might be accused of having a conflict of interest, since Tommy is your brother. But like I said, we all make mistakes, and we just need to be willing to learn from them. We should be as tolerant of the mistakes of others as we want them to be tolerant of our mistakes. And I mean that sincerely.

At any rate,

Question 2: Do you know who asked and authorized Mike Riva to threaten Pastor Dryden with legal action?

When I first heard of that, it just sounded so foreign to the types of things I've heard Conference officials say about how these kinds of things need to be handled in order to avoid possible liability.

Walt also wrote:

"We then discussed the situation with the full board."

Question 3: Was a copy of the 2003 letter, along with the suggested "Action Items," given to each board member?

Finally, here is one more bit of information that Walt provided, dealing with the further investigation he conducted recently:

"Subsequently, after this issue has been brought back to the forefront (I think there is only one person who could have known about this and brought it to world-wide attention, and that person was then on the board and voted with the consensus) I contacted the only person from the Church of God that I could find that knew about the situation, and who had been present and witness to the events. (Except for pastor Dryden's personal accounts, there are apparently no other records of the allegations.) The picture that was painted by that leader of the Church was exactly as portrayed earlier by Danny. Dryden was jealous of Tommy and was out to get him - a jealousy that has continued to the present. I was again informed that the DA knew about the allegations and not finding a basis, refused to act against Tommy. I have been informed that the Church of God is a congregational type or organization with different jurisdictions in different states and that there was no higher authority that I could speak with to resolve the issue further. It was not entirely clear to me how that worked. I was also told that one leader pestered Tommy over and over again until Tommy voluntarily gave up his ministerial license."

My understanding is that a church became split over this issue because Tommy denied the allegations, some siding with Tommy and some siding with the alleged victims. If the individual referred to above was of the faction that sided with Tommy, I can understand why his or her account would differ so drastically from that of the alleged victims, their families, and the two licensing associations that Tommy is not in good standing with.

Yet on the other side of the question, Gailon, who had not talked with Pastor Dryden as of yesterday sometime, says

that he had no problem finding alleged victims and others who also were witnesses to the events and who tell quite a different story. Thus one is left to wonder why Walt just happened to be only able to locate this one individual who tells such a different story. And that leads up to,

Question 4: Who gave Walt the name of this individual to contact, or how did he get their name, and how can I contact that individual to get their side of the story?

Certainly Tommy would have known who sided with him in the church split, and thus I want to make sure that the reason Walt could only locate this single individual was not because that was the only name that either Tommy or you provided to Walt. And/or, by getting his or her side of the story, it is always possible that I might be able to get information that could be used to vindicate Tommy, such as that he really did apologize.

But as far as proving that there haven't been any allegations for 30 years, I just don't know what I can do about that, given what the 2003 letter plainly states. I welcome your suggestions.

Lastly,

Question 5: What exactly did Tommy apologize for?

I'm guessing that one possible explanation for the discrepancy might be that Tommy did apologize for something, but not for what certain ones wanted him to, and thus it might be helpful to know what he felt he did do wrong that did need apologizing for.

As I told Walt, I have been very concerned that such serious allegations have been on the internet for so long in such a public way. And I am firmly convicted that such public allegations have to be dealt with in a public way. So do think through your responses and try to come across as courteous as possible, so that I can use them to do that without embarrassing anyone connected with 3ABN.

I think it is such a blessing that we can get this one behind us now, if it is possible to do so. You certainly don't need these kind of unresolved issues as the ASI panel process gets in motion.

God bless.
Bob

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***"Truth invites examination & needs no defense.
Lies hide in darkness & blame everyone else."***