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ATNewsbreak
Reporting for Adventist moderates and progressives
February 12, 2007

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ATNewsbreak reports on contemporary issues of importance to those in the Adventist community. To accomplish this, we include contemporary headlines and commentary on news, events, and the contents of web sites from a spectrum of thought, including summaries of news not reported in other Adventist media with special attention to reports of interest to Adventist moderates and progressives. We also provide previews of upcoming Adventist Today stories and reports, and excerpts of articles or books. – ATNewsbreak Editor: Lee Greer, Adventist Today Associate Executive Editor. Contact: lee@.... Further headlines and other items with the next ATNewsbreak.

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Awestruck! Anthropologist-essayist-poet, Loren Eiseley, many years ago described the miracle of a migratory flight of warblers across the desolate Dakota badlands.

ADVENTIST NEWS Round up
Tommy Shelton Retires from 3ABN
Virginia church meets to address allegations of sexual misconduct
 By Edwin D. Schwisow, for ATNewsbreak (09 February 2007).
 Facing multiple allegations of sexual misconduct, Tommy Shelton, production manager at Three Angels Broadcasting Network (3ABN) and brother of 3ABN President Danny Shelton, announced his retirement in a December 31, 2006 broadcast of 3ABN Live. Although not owned or operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, many of 3ABN's employees and volunteers are Adventist Church members. In a telephone interview with a representative of Adventist Today, Danny Shelton confirmed that his brother had left the employ of 3ABN for "health reasons."

Virginia Church Allegations
 Tommy Shelton's retirement comes just four weeks after the Community Church of God in Dunn Loring, Virginia, held a December 3, 2006, business meeting to address accusations made by several young men that Tommy had molested them while he was pastor of the church. Following the meeting, church leaders read a carefully-worded statement, apprising the congregation of the accusations against Shelton and how they, as parishioners, should best respond. The church leaders prepared the statement under the advisement of their insurance carrier, Brotherhood Mutual, which had become involved after a young man came to the church with allegations that Tommy, during his pastorate, had molested him. The young man was a minor when he says he was abused. He is the third in recent months to come forward to Community Church of God leaders, accusing Shelton of making inappropriate sexual advances, according to Glenn Dryden, current pastor of the church.

A History of Allegations
 This is not the first time Tommy has been accused of inappropriate sexual activity with underage males. During much of the 1980s, Tommy pastored the Ezra Church of God in his hometown of West Frankfort, Illinois. While there, he worked closely with a 12-grade school, whose property bordered the church. During this time, a teenage boy, who was a student

at the school, accused Tommy of soliciting him for a sexual relationship. According to Dryden, who pastored the West Frankfort church in the 1990s, three additional boys also made similar allegations, prompting civil authorities to become involved. Following a police investigation, Tommy was not charged with a crime, but the allegations were serious enough to prompt Church of God officials to intervene. In a letter dated October 25, 1985, the General Assembly of the Church of God in Illinois revoked Tommy's ordination. They listed their reasons for doing so as "improper counseling procedures," "numerous charges of misconduct," a criminal investigation into sexual abuse charges by the local police, and controversy surrounding Tommy's ministry and lifestyle. Ultimately Tommy's lack of cooperation in the disciplinary process, Dryden says, led the Church of God in Illinois to drop the Ezra Church of God from its roster of affiliated congregations.

In the early 1990s, further allegations of sexual misconduct were brought against Tommy and in 1991 Tommy resigned as pastor of the Ezra Church of God, citing health concerns.

Allegations at 3ABN

Shortly after Tommy resigned his post as pastor, Danny invited him to join 3ABN as production manager. During his time at 3ABN, a member of Tommy's production staff, who was in his early twenties at the time, says Tommy made a sexual advance toward him. Shortly after what he calls his "uncomfortable situation," the former employee says he confronted Danny Shelton with what had happened. In response, Danny assured the young man that he would no longer have to answer to Tommy and that 3ABN administrators would "work things out."

In late 1992, Elder Bj Christensen, then president of the Illinois Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, approached two members of Danny's family, asking them to make a statement in regard to improprieties they had observed in Tommy's behavior. Elder Christiansen transcribed the statement and brought it to the attention of the 3ABN board, on which he then sat.

At a subsequent 3ABN board meeting, Tommy was terminated as production manager. Shortly thereafter, 3ABN outfitted him with a touring bus and sent him as a 3ABN representative, giving gospel concerts and promoting 3ABN to cable companies throughout the United States.

Connections in Virginia

During the time he was promoting 3ABN, he visited the Community Church of God in Dunn Loring. After learning that Tommy had experience with media ministry, the church offered him a position as a media consultant. Later he was hired as assistant pastor for media ministries. When the church's senior pastor left for missionary service in March 1996, Tommy was named as his replacement.

Further allegations of sexual misconduct surfaced during his tenure in Dunn Loring, and in 2000, members of Tommy's own family confronted him about what they saw as inappropriate activities between him and his adopted son. His family also shared their concerns about his relationship with an underage male from the church.

In the face of the new allegations, Tommy once again announced he was having medical problems in 2002 and resigned as pastor of the Community Church of God, moving with his wife and family to Marion, Kentucky, an hour and a half drive from 3ABN. Later that year, Tommy was hired as 3ABN tape and masters archive librarian, without the formal approval of the 3ABN board of directors, a group that had fired him just 10 years before.

Pastor Contacts 3ABN

In the spring of 2003, Dryden, then pastor of the Ezra Church of God in West Frankfort, penned a letter outlining his concerns about Tommy Shelton. He distributed it to a handful of leaders of Church of God camp meeting associations, whom he knew, in the past, had invited Tommy to speak at their church meetings.

He later sent the letter to Dr. Walter Thompson, 3ABN board chairman, advising him that "at least six boys in our community were sexually abused" by Tommy. He told Thompson that Tommy's ordination was not in good standing with either the Church of God in Illinois or Virginia and offered to give Thompson the phone numbers of the family members of Tommy's purported victims so that 3ABN could follow up on the situation.

Thompson spoke with Dryden and then brought the letter to the attention of Danny Shelton. Danny brushed the letter off as 30-year old news, attributing it to a long-standing feud between Dryden and Tommy. After meeting with Danny, Thompson

brought the letter to the full 3ABN board at its June 2003 meeting. The board, due to its belief that the events had happened many years before; Tommy's assurance that he had attempted to make things right; and the fact that no legal action had been taken against Tommy, voted to allow Tommy's relationship with 3ABN to continue.

Further Allegations

In the Spring of 2004, Roger W. Clem, a 32 year-old man who had attended the Ezra Church of God during his teenage years, released a letter he had written to Tommy, accusing him of sexual abuse. In his letter, which he later posted on the Internet, Clem claims Tommy had ruined 15 years of his life. He says that he is sick of Tommy's manipulative behavior, including his claims of illness to divert attention away from allegations of sexual misconduct.

On June 4, 2004, Linda Shelton signed a Separation Agreement with 3ABN, ending her employment with the ministry. Later that year, Tommy moved into her old office at 3ABN and assumed her role as programming director. During his time at 3ABN he traveled with his brother to 3ABN gatherings around the world, many times playing the piano as Danny sang. He also began playing the piano for the Kids Time show on 3ABN.

Late in 2006, Duane Klem, Roger's brother, shared with close associates that Tommy had molested him, as well. In a statement released in January 2007, Klem accused Tommy of initiating a sexual relationship with him when he was 19, at times using 3ABN buildings for their assignations. Klem says the growing number of allegations against Tommy prompted him to come forward with his claims.

Adventist Investigators

Much of the pressure that Tommy Shelton now faces has come from the efforts of a small, informal network of Seventh-day Adventist individuals. Many in the group categorize themselves as conservative Adventists, a constituency 3ABN has long relied on for key support. For the past five months, this unpaid volunteer group has investigated a number of allegations against Danny Shelton and 3ABN. Some they have found to be true, while others have proved to be false. Doing their work primarily via telephone and e-mail, the group has interviewed dozens of people who have had connections with 3ABN and the Shelton family over the last 20 years.

Two members of the network—Gailon Arthur Joy, a loan officer trainer from Sterling, Massachusetts, and Bob Pickle, a webmaster and Adventist apologist from Halstad, Minnesota—have posted the findings of their investigation on the Internet. Both men espouse belief in a historical, conservative Adventist theology, including the traditional church teachings about 1844 and Ellen G. White, and say that before starting their investigation, they had positive feelings toward 3ABN and its ministry.

“3ABN was an integral part of our home TV viewing for more than a decade. My family members have contributed heavily to 3ABN (financially),” says Joy. Joy spearheaded an effort as late as May 2006 to pass out over 6,000 copies of Danny Shelton’s book *Ten Commandments Twice Removed*.

Joy and Pickle say they only began investigating when concerned Adventist friends urged them to help them verify or dismiss rumors of misconduct at the 3ABN. As they conducted their initial investigation, both men became impressed that what was happening behind the scenes at 3ABN didn’t mesh with the rosy picture they had seen on their television screens.

In late 2006, Joy, who has experience as a legal clerk, was asked by Linda Shelton to represent her as she negotiated the ground rules for an inquiry by Adventist-laymen’s Services and Industries (ASI) into the propriety of her divorce from Danny Shelton. Harold Lance, a retired attorney and former president of the self-supporting organization, Outpost Centers Incorporated, led the inquiry. In early 2007, the ASI-brokered negotiations fell apart early, due in part to the inability of the two parties to reach an understanding on the manner or scope of the inquiry. Lance, who had been asked to head up the inquiry by the ASI Executive Committee in October, summarized the dissolution of the inquiry in an e-mail statement on January 5.

“For approximately three months ASI has deeply considered its’ involvement in issues involving 3ABN in three special Executive Committee meetings called for that purpose and multiple other contacts.” Lance wrote. “It now appears that it is not appropriate for ASI to be involved.”

Joy has registered a website at www.save3abn.com that contains documents and statements from various sources involved in the group’s investigation of Tommy Shelton. As of press time, the site had

received more than 1,900 hits.

Joy and Pickle have a growing list of e-mail contacts, many in church leadership, to whom they plan to send periodic communication, chronicling what they see as areas in which 3ABN must be held to higher accountability.

Adventist Today offered Dr. Thompson, in his capacity as 3ABN Board Chairman, an opportunity to confirm, disconfirm, or provide additional information concerning the accuracy of the parts of this report that cover areas about which he had direct, personal knowledge.

In an e-mail to the Executive Editor of Adventist Today, he stated that in view of a conversation that he had had with Danny Shelton, he would "withhold further comment at present." [To comment or inquire about this story, e-mail AToday]

Southern Illinois Hometown City Leaders Laud Danny Shelton's Support

By Edwin D. Schwisow, for ATNewsbreak (09 February 2007).

Danny Shelton, 3ABN president, is very willing to lend a helping hand financially to the civic needs of his boyhood town of West Frankfort, Illinois, say several prominent people there. "If our city had a meaningful project we needed to have a joint relationship financially with Three Angels, I anticipate that wouldn't be a problem," says Larry Warren, mayor of West Frankfort.

Warren goes on to describe how Shelton used 3ABN to promote the Roan Center, a home for abused women and children. On a November 24, 2006, broadcast of 3ABN Today, Shelton interviewed Sara Bond, one of the Center's founders about mission of the organization and asked his viewers to send in donations to help Bond accomplish her goals. Shelton also pledged \$5,000 from 3ABN to help Bond with her project. Bond recently thanked 3ABN in an article published in the February 1 edition of the West Frankfort Press American. In the article, she said that the broadcast had raised \$4,490 so far and that she continued to receive consistent donations from 3ABN viewers. "We have had donations from Oregon, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arizona," Bond said in the article. Franklin Community High School (FCHS) in West Frankfort has received thousands of dollars from Shelton as well according to Richard Glodich, athletic

director at the school. "Danny Shelton and 3ABN are an asset to our school. There's no doubt about it," says Glodich. "Any time we're in need of help, Mr. Shelton is always willing to help." Glodich estimates 3ABN has donated \$30,000 to the athletic department of FCHS alone during the 10 years he's been athletic director. He says that Shelton donated several thousand dollars to the school to help modernize their weight room and donated money towards athletic fields at the local junior high school. 3ABN donated close to \$10,000 in prizes for the school's Red Ribbon Week, Glodich says. He says they brought cameramen out to videotape the event so it could be publicized locally.

According to Glodich, it was a donation by 3ABN and Shelton that was the catalyst for a peer-mentoring program to begin on campus. Dubbed Alpha groups, the program enables juniors and seniors at the school to spend an hour each Thursday visiting with students in the freshman and sophomore classes, building friendships and urging them to stay clear of alcohol and drugs.

Danny Shelton is also a regular at FCHS Cardinal athletic events, especially men's' varsity basketball games Glodich says. "Oh yeah, we see him all the time, probably at least 10 times a year, he's here for games."

For many in West Frankfort, Danny Shelton is a man to admire. His philanthropy and personal "rags to riches" story of establishing 3ABN has endeared him to many admirers in the town his hometown. Interestingly many in the small city of Thompsonville have very different sentiments. Their viewpoints will be explored in an upcoming edition of Adventist Today.

Rwanda: Death of the Adventist Minister Elizaphan Ntakirutimana
Hirondelle News Agency , Lausanne, (January 23, 2007). Arusha, Tanzania. "The Adventist Church minister, Elizaphan Ntakirutimana, released on December 7th by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) after he had completed his 10 year prison term, died in the night of Monday to Tuesday, an official source has reported on Tuesday. According to the ICTR's spokesperson, Everard O'Donnell, the minister passed away in a hospital of Arusha. The ICTR is waiting for 'instructions' from the deceased's family, he added. Ntakirutimana, 82, had been the first condemned of the ICTR to be liberated

at the end of his prison term. After his release, the old man, exhausted, had briefly called on the Rwandan population to 'not make false allegations against innocents, like him.'... In 1994, he was at the head of the Mugonero Adventist Church complex located in the region of Kibuye (west) which comprised a church, a hospital and a secondary school. Thousands of Tutsis died there in the month of April 1994." [More of the story].

Adventist Surgeon Receives UN Humanitarian Award
 Adventist News. "Onuoha Clement, a pediatric surgeon and an elder of the Adventist church in Yaba, Lagos, Nigeria, was one of six United Nations (UN) volunteers to receive Awards of Excellence for 'their commitment as ambassadors of volunteerism for development.' The ceremony took place at Port of Spain in Trinidad and Tobago on December 20, 2006. Ad Melkert, UN undersecretary general and associate administrator of the UN Development Program, presented the awards. Clement was recognized specifically for his part in successfully organizing a Walk Against Child Hunger in Trinidad and Tobago in May 2006. Medical colleagues, Adventist Pathfinder groups, and other local community groups also participated."

REVIEW of the Review

Four-finned dolphin evidence of evolution? Opinion piece by Timothy G. Standish, Research Scientist, The Geoscience Research Institute, Adventist Review (14 December 2006). Citing a Fox News report of a developmentally-abnormal dolphin with "the usual two pectoral fins and two fins near its tail" as evidence for evolution, Standish asks in his brief opinion piece, "How can deformity be evidence supporting Darwinism?" He then proceeds to dismiss evolutionary theory. Of course, if he wishes to express his opinions as a believer or a church leader, he certainly may. However, with his scientific training, Dr. Standish has a responsibility to accurately represent the science. If he discusses the question of whale evolution, he should not merely cite a Fox News report, but should at least mention the mounting data published in the peer-reviewed scientific literature on the evolution and common ancestry of whales with some other land mammals, along with the healthy vibrant discussion these data generate among scientists. No, these data certainly don't constitute "evidence God did not create them [whales, etc.]" – but they just may be evidence for how!

An ecumenical moment! Imam By Dr. James Appel,

Bere Adventist Hospital, (Béré, Tchad, Africa), Adventist Review (18 January 2007). After an Adventist physician and chaplain at the 20-year old Adventist hospital in Tchad joined a local imam for prayer and offered to set up a shelter because "our Muslim brothers have no real place to pray to Allah at our hospital" the imam is on record saying, "Ever since you invited me to be present at your campmeeting and share a few words, I have felt that God is working here in Béré through the Adventist Hospital... I know it must be Allah who has inspired you to treat us this way – as brothers and fellow believers in the one true God." Imagine what could happen in Christian-Muslim relations, if the imperial kind of Christianity were replaced by the Jesus kind!

AWESTRUCK!

Nearly half a century ago, evolutionary biologist and anthropologist-essayist-poet, Loren Eiseley in his classic, *The Immense Journey*, wrote the following haunting description of a flight of migrating warblers he observed one evening while on a fossil collecting trip in the Dakota badlands.

"It was a late hour on a cold, wind-bitten autumn day when I climbed a great hill spined like a dinosaur's back and tried to take my bearings. The tumbled waste fell away in waves in all directions. Blue air was darkening into purple along the bases of the hills. I shifted my knapsack, heavy with the petrified bones of long-vanished creatures, and studied my compass. I wanted to be out of there by nightfall, and already the sun was going sullenly down in the west. It was then that I saw the flight coming on. It was moving like a little close-knit body of black specks that danced and darted and closed again. It was pouring from the north and heading toward me with the undeviating relentlessness of a compass needle. It streamed through the shadows rising out of monstrous gorges. It rushed over towering pinnacles in the red light of the sun, or momentarily sank from sight within their shade. Across that desert of eroding clay and wind-worn stone they came with a faint wild twittering that filled all the air about me as those tiny living bullets hurtled past into the night."

– Loren Eiseley

The Immense Journey: An Imaginative Naturalist Explores the Mysteries of Man and Nature.
(Vintage, 1959).

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<p>Re: From Adventist Today News Break Adventist Today and 3ABN are miles apart in their prospectives. If Adventist Today type of programing would take over 3ABN the "new movement" spoken of by EGW...</p>	<p>Ulicia mydedicat ☺ 📧</p>
<p>Re: From Adventist Today News Break Ulicia, I was troubled to read the AToday criticism of Tim Standish that favored evolution in the very issue that covered 3ABN. Yet I will add that if you quiz...</p>	<p>Bob Pickle bpickle144 ☺ 📧</p>
<p>Re: From Adventist Today News Break Brothers and sisters the new movement is here already. Here is the question? Where is our Three Angele Logos? What happened to it and why did they change it? ...</p>	<p>sailasa nai snylover ☺ 📧</p>

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| <p>Re: From Adventist Today News Break
Apparently Adventist Today is NOT an official Adventist paper. You have to pay to subscribe and I am surprised that people will do this when it's not...</p> | <p>Barb Loma
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| <p>Re: From Adventist Today News Break
It's just like 3ABN Barb - NOT an official church organisation (as in 'OWNED' by the church [GC]), but one which people send donations (and even their tithe)...</p> | <p>Lexie Lord
lexie_lord
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| <p>Re: From Adventist Today News Break
Three Angels Broadcasting Responds to Edwin Schwisow's "news" By Walter Thompson The story by Edwin Schwisow regarding Linda Shelton's recent termination from...</p> | <p>Ulicia
mydedicat
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| <p>Re: From Adventist Today News Break
Ulicia, I think that this response by Thompson is to an article published a long time ago, not the recent one. And it is possible that the older article in...</p> | <p>Bob Pickle
bpickle144
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| <p>Re: From Adventist Today News Break
I notice that you have not included any reference to the allegations of sexual molestation, which is the main bone of contention, but which it seems, is the...</p> | <p>Lexie Lord
lexie_lord
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| <p>Re: From Adventist Today News Break
I simply posted a response from 3ABN to Edwin Schwisau, the author that seems to be doing the reporting concerning 3ABN to A-Today. I'm wondering why we should...</p> | <p>Ulicia
mydedicat
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| <p>Re: From Adventist Today News Break
Ulicia, Ronnie Shelton asked me the same question you have posed here: Since Tommy is gone, why bring it up? Here are my thoughts: * Danny has yet to...</p> | <p>Bob Pickle
bpickle144
 </p> |
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| <p>Re: From Adventist Today News Break
... wrote: I think that this response by Thompson is to an article published a long time ago, not the recent one. And it is possible that the older article in...</p> | <p>Ulicia
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 </p> |
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| <p>Re: From Adventist Today News Break
Ulicia, Good questions and observations. 1) Is there a chance Danny believed his smooth talking brother? I highly doubt it, for that would have been a simple...</p> | <p>Bob Pickle
bpickle144
 </p> |
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| <p>Re: From Adventist Today News Break
Bob, Thank-you for your objective comments. You are welcome to keep us updated on this forum concerning the progression of these events. I trust both sides...</p> | <p>Ulicia
mydedicat
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