

Ex. R**Subject:** Letter from Tommy Shelton to CCOG, Dunn Loring, VA**From:** No One You Know**Date:** Sat, 17 Feb 2007 17:47:14 -0800 (PST)**To:**

An Open Letter

To the many I have loved through the years. I am sending you this letter in response to an open letter that was sent to many, if not all, of you from Pastor Glenn Dryden. This letter is not meant as revenge, but so that you might be informed of the other side of the story.

From my first hearing of allegations against me at the Community Church of God I determined to say as little as possible in order to keep as much harmony among the congregation as possible. In the very beginning, I determined not to even express my guilt or innocence fearing people may tend to choose sides and be divided. I wanted to go through proper channels and wait to see how it would all be handled. I should mention that I was not contacted by the church to let me know that allegations had been made against me. In fact, for those who don't know, I first found out about allegations from someone who had seen it posted on the internet with Glenn Dryden's name signed to it. Upon checking into it, I found that the allegations against me had been put on the internet for the world to see at least two weeks before the church body was even informed. Not only were allegations from the Community Church of God posted, but postings of letters, accusations and copies of personal documents going back more than 20 years - all signed by Pastor Glenn Dryden.

Realizing that this issue had become public over the internet and then taken before the church, without my knowing it, I decided to write to the board expressing my position. A number of other lay people and pastors also began writing to the board expressing their disagreement, if not outrage, that a pastor would handle this situation in such an unbiblical way. To my knowledge these letters, mine or others, have not been read to the congregation or even at the meeting of the church staff.

Since no one has contacted me to advise, inform or let us know what the purpose is of the meetings which are being held, and since there have been more postings on the internet, as recent as January 16, and since Pastor Glenn Dryden has written an open letter to the congregation (and sent it to some outside the church as well) I find it necessary to write an open letter myself. I would in no way have been the first to write an open letter, but his actions have now compelled me to give another side.

My letter will basically be an answer to his "rationale" for handling this situation as he has. It is lengthy but I beg a few minutes of your time to hear the other side of the story.

I will begin with the opening paragraph of his cover sheet where he admits to "cooperating with certain Seventh Day Adventist **"ecclesiastical investigators"** who were looking into Tommy Shelton's conduct while he pastored in Illinois as well as presently in his employment at the 3ABN Seventh Day Adventist television ministry in Illinois."

These men are **not** "ecclesiastical investigators" for the Seventh Day Adventist. They hold no official position, and have no authority in the Seventh Day Adventist Church to investigate anything or anybody. By next week I will have

in hand an official statement from the Illinois Conference President of SDA, stating that these men do not work for the Seventh-Day-Adventist church and were not authorized to investigate anyone. Gailon Joy, one of the "self appointed investigators" was convicted of embezzlement in the 80's. Although one may get the impression after talking with him that he is a lawyer, he is not. His conviction was appealed 3 times but the conviction remained. We have evidence of his unscrupulous dealings in recent months and years and you will also hear in the near future that he is being held accountable for his slander in a court of law.

The web site that your pastor was cooperating with is a garbage dump whose purpose is to destroy my brother and Three Angels broadcasting Network. This is how I got into the mix. In endeavoring to bring down my brother, his ex-wife gathered a group together to bring down all Board Members and Executives of the network.

The mentality of many of those who actively post on the web sites that Pastor Dryden gave information to can be seen in a few excerpts taken from the sites.

(highlights are mine)

"Unless Danny can prove otherwise that he did not kill his first wife we should probably believe that Fran and Johann are correct that Danny is a murderer. They have also said that he is a child molester, adulterer, liar, thief, conman, burglar, vandal, and almost every other crime in the book. Almost like Hitler, except Hitler did it a lot more times. **If Danny has not done all this then obviously blacksda and the people who have provided this information can later apologize.** (same posting) The fact that they **actually witnessed these things**, including murder attempts, with physicality adds another dimension for those who are weaker who **require both faith and sight. But those who are pure can go based on faith that Danny did these things alone** based on the word of testimony and **without the need** for worldly evidence."

Danny's first wife was killed in a car accident. She was hit head on by an oncoming car. Any suggestion of ANYTHING else is a black lie. Notice the mentality – If Danny has not done all of thiscan later apologize. In other words, put it out there, do the damage and apologize later if it is not true. Notice the scary statement – but those who are "pure" can go based on "**faith**" that **Danny did these things**. This is typical of the numerous postings on the sight. Many things we have viewed on the site do not even have an element of truth.

For example, Gailon Joy posted an article that stated that 3ABN gave me a check for \$10,000 to get me out of a child molestation case while I lived in Manassas, VA. No check was produced (because it doesn't exist) and I challenge anyone to check every county in Virginia and see if such a case ever existed.

These are the kinds of people that Pastor Dryden has been comfortable "cooperating with." Following is an excerpt from one of his conversations posted on the internet. I quote:

(highlights are mine)

"I am sure we share similar emotions regarding this matter. Perhaps an argument may be made for the criticism you have received regarding the e-mail postings, but I should tell you that they have **served to make me comfortable communicating with both you and Mr. Joy and if they serve to put pressure on Danny and Tommy, you may carry the criticism as a badge of commendation.**"

How sad that he would welcome pressure be put on my brother. He knows absolutely nothing about my brother's situation except what he has been told by the "self appointed investigators" The truth is, no statement against my brother, or 3ABN, has been made by the General Conference of the Seventh Day Adventist Church or by any of it's top leadership. To the contrary, ASI, one of the most prestigious organizations in the Adventist denomination just came out with a statement in support of Danny and 3ABN - and in the same statement revealed much about Gailon Joy.

In paragraph five of his cover letter, Pastor Dryden next points you to two web sites to read a number of letters from those who came forward against me.

He fails to mention that he is the one who supplied the names of these people to "the self appointed investigators" who called these people asking for statements to be published on the internet. We can only guess as to what kind of pressure these people were put under (I've been told - I can't confirm) that one was told by the "self appointed investigators" that he had better say something quickly because I intended a lawsuit and was planning to drag him into it, which of course, is not true.

Pressure would certainly seem to explain a lot concerning one person who came forward against me, because just days prior to his posting about me, he wrote (copied from the internet)

"Your "informant", Glenn Dryden, is not a credible source of information. ... accusations the same reason as the ones he is leveling against Tommy Shelton: JEALOUSY. Glenn Dryden is a spiteful, vindictive backstabber when someone crosses him. He has done this with numerous people over the past several years I had to threaten him with legal action myself to get him to shut his mouth."

Sad to say, some of the people whose names Pastor Dryden released to the internet group, are now going through character assassination themselves because of their statements, by people who knew them "way back when" and have reason to doubt their testimony. His actions of hurt are far more reaching than just "bringing me down."

In the next to the last paragraph of his cover page, Pastor Dryden says: "Please know Sister Judy and I have in no way sought to be placed in the position we are in. We must, however, be conscientious to do what we can to protect young people."

In 2001 he made a similar statement to the Ezra Church of God in a meeting that he taped and sent out to various churches. He said, "**I never hunted out information, it seemed to drop into my lap.**" These statements are not convincing, in light of the fact that just last week he called a former member of the Dunn Loring congregation to ask if I had ever spent time alone with his sons and said that he was calling others who had sons to ask the same question. I am also aware of a phone call that was made in 2003, from Illinois to Virginia, asking similar questions.

Secondly, he states that he is doing what he can to protect young people. What young people?

I have worked for the last 6 years in an environment where there are NO young people.

(I understand that you pastor has mentioned the 3ABN Kids Time program - that these children could possibly be in danger. Kids Time hasn't even been taped in two years, - It's all reruns - and when it was being taped, it was in a studio two miles from where I worked and when I did go over to accompany a guest, it was in a studio filled with parents and camera people for an hour or so two or three times per season). I attend a church where there are NO young people. I live in a rural area where there are NO young people for miles. I have not preached a campmeeting where there were young people for over five years. I live 800 miles from the young people at Community Church of God. How could this be his real motive?

Now, on to the **Open Letter** – I will give my opinion on certain things, but I will also point out **definite discrepancies**. As you will see, although Pastor Dryden's letter sounds as though he knows all the details of my life for the past 20 plus years, he was NOT in Illinois 20 yrs. ago and has had to rely on what he has been told, and I will prove that much of it is not accurate.

Early on in his open letter, Pastor Dryden quotes from a book by Marie M. Fortune apparently as an important

guide for his drastic actions against me thus far. He quotes her before he quotes scripture. It is interesting that he quotes from a book **whose author is a feminist and lesbian**. The following taken from this web site.

<http://www.faithandfeminism.org/stories>.

"I have been an ordained Christian pastor for 30 years. I have been a feminist even longer. I have always had a love-hate relationship with my church. (later in the article she says) My own denomination, the United Church of Christ, has come a long way in the past 30 years. It has always supported me from my ordination without a job to these years of my ministry at FaithTrust Institute. Moreover it has more recently supported me as a lesbian in my ministry and in my right to marry. So this is a faith community where I can go and be loved and not have to fight all the time for acceptance. I can spend that energy at work in the world trying to live the Gospel as I see it." (notice – as she sees it)

Marie Fortune quotes Willard Gaylin. In my search on the internet, although I found dozens and dozens of articles about him, and by him, I found nothing that expressed a personal Christian experience. Following is a short bio:

Willard Gaylin, MD

Clinical professor of psychiatry at Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons, specializing in the private practice of psychiatry and psychoanalysis. He is presently serving on the board of directors of several organizations including: Planned Parenthood..

Planned Parenthood – an organization promoting abortion rights etc.

So in his opening remarks, Pastor Dryden quotes from a feminist, lesbian minister and a man who is not a theologian but a psychiatrist. And based on statements from their books that declare "we must dignify him (the offender) by making him pay for the evil actions he commits"- and that "negative consequence may be the most direct route to repentance," he then states in bold: **"Tommy Shelton deserves the opportunity to repent and to amend his life according to the will of God.**

II Cor. 7:10 says, "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." True repentance comes from God – it's a gift - not consequences or having to "pay." Negative consequences may cause one to try to change behavior for a time, but true repentance only comes from God through godly sorrow - As the verse says, "...but the sorrow of the world – (getting caught – consequences etc) worketh death.

If Pastor Dryden believes that I need to repent, repentance will not be brought about by shaming me before the whole world on the internet – humiliating my wife and children by those very actions. He concludes that I am an unbeliever.... What lost man, me or anyone else, would listen to a man that is trying to destroy him in the eyes of everyone he has ever known. If his efforts are to bring repentance and win me to Jesus, he certainly has missed the mark.

I will move now to the Boy Scouts of America "analogy." I'm not sure of the purpose of the analogy since intelligent people can easily understand the facts (as Pastor Dryden sees them)

without an analogy. But if I were a member of Ezra Church of God or Community Church of God, I would probably take exception to a couple of points in the analogy.

First the insult to parents at Ezra: Quote: "Subsequently, inexplicably, certain Boy Scout troop parents determine this scoutmaster's **charisma, gifts and abilities outweigh any potential risk** and they ask him to lead their sons in scouting activities." Implication – certain parents at Ezra were so captivated by my charm that they could not make intelligent decisions concerning their children. That is a slap in the face to those loving parent who attend Ezra in those days.

Second, the implication of irresponsibility on the part of Community Church of God leaders – foremost, Bro. and

Sis. Wood.: "The scoutmaster learns the BSA has need of scoutmasters in his new venue. He approaches this state's Area Council, his offer of assistance is accepted and he takes the helm of another scout troop, astonishingly, without any representative of this state's Area Council confirming his character with a representative of the former state's Area Council." He makes a similar statement on the internet for the world to see – I quote: "Also in the late 1980s there was mention of "allegations" at the time of his receiving ministerial credentials from the Ministerial Council of the Church of God, Inc., but **assurance was given by Council leadership** that there was no substance to these allegations. No indication of their nature was given either - not to me at any rate."

This statement could mean no other than Bro. and Sis. Wood who headed up the Ministerial Council of the Church of God, Inc., at the time. These two statements imply either irresponsibility, or cover-up on the part of the Woods. Let me set the record straight. Bro. and Sis. Wood was neither irresponsible nor were they part of a cover-up. They acted in good faith both in my ordination with the Ministerial Council of the Church of God and in the call to be pastor of the Community Church of God.

They called me in the middle 80's after hearing of allegations to offer prayer and support and yes, years later called me to come to Dunn Loring knowing of the allegations. They based their decision on information they had. For example they knew of a police investigation that yielded no evidence and resulted in no charges. They were aware that my chairman of the board was a well respected State Patrolman and would have known the details of the investigation, and supported me fully. They also knew people that they respected who were supporting me like Ben Jordan who was part of the congregation at the time and actually went to the police to testify in my behalf. Things like the above caused them to be confident in calling me to come to Dunn Loring. NO FAULT can be laid at the feet of Bro. and Sis. Wood.

Pastor Dryden titles the next portion of his letter "**Following are Facts.**" They are **NOT** facts! Quote:

"a disciplinary process following the principle given in Matthew 18:15-17 was initiated by the Illinois General Assembly (IGA). **Rather than submit to this disciplinary process, Tommy and his supporters stymied it and divided the congregation of the Ezra Church of God from the Anderson Church of God movement** of which they had been a part for sixty-five years. The directive of Matthew 18:15-17 was followed by IGA and accordingly Tommy was "treated like an unbeliever"

I can disprove these statements with excerpts from a letter dated Dec. 13, 1987. This letter was written to George L. Newton and the Credentials Committee (IGA), and was written by A.J. Mitchell, Chairman of the Board, Ezra Church of God. A.J. was Chairman of the Board at Ezra for many years. He was one of the most respected men in W. Frankfort, an Illinois State Patrolman, a member of civic organizations in the community – Bus director at Ezra, Sunday School teacher and a respected Christian in our community. I had the privilege of leading A.J. to the Lord. He is now deceased. Some of you may remember him coming to Gerri Lynn's wedding in 1999.

Was Matthew 18 followed by the (IGA) - Quote from A.J. Mitchell's letter:

".....Since you said your suspension of Tommy was done "...pending the results of the official police investigation....", what were the results of the investigation? Was he found guilty? If so, guilty of what? Who judged him guilty? I must assume that you feel that he was found guilty of something or you would not have decided to revoke his ordination. If he was found guilty of something, whatever you feel that might be, *you gave him no room for repentance. You do feel that a person can repent, don't you?"*

In the same letter he talks about a letter from the (IGA) that never reached our church but was sent to area churches registered.....A.J. says, : "I am very disturbed that we learned of such a letter through a teenager who honestly had no business knowing of the contents of the letter. **This action exemplifies the methods typically used throughout the entire ordeal which we have tolerated for the past several months.**" (highlights mine)

The facts are, the first allegation was made in September of 1985 and my credentials were suspended on October 25, 1985 without anyone contacting me (IGA did not follow Matt. 18) The next correspondence I have with

the committee in my records is dated January 29, 1987 – over a year later.

On a tape previously mentioned taped at Ezra Church of God in 2001, Pastor Dryden states that

I erred in not resigning when accusations were first made. He says my sin was the sin of division because of not resigning.

I did resign immediately upon hearing of accusations. I resigned the church and a pastor from the First Church of God who had just resigned that church, came to be the interim pastor.

I Quote from a letter dated Nov. 1, 1985 from one of the pillars of the church to the General Assembly of the Church of God in Illinois”**I might bring to your attention, now, that Brother Tommy resigned as Pastor from the Ezra Church of God , Sept. 15, 1985. This should have been a major influence in your decision, and, it is all the more reason that the action your committee has taken is completely out of order!”**

For at least the next 9 months I did not preach and I ceased activities in the Church of God as instructed. I worked at 3ABN during that time, in construction, as it was just being built at the time. I never contacted the church – never asked about being reinstated – had no aspirations of returning – did no preaching etc. About 9 months after leaving the church, A.J Mitchell, representing Ezra Church of God, came to our home and asked me to come back as pastor. I told him that it was useless to try to minister if the church was divided. He assured me that those who chose to leave were already gone and that the church was united in wanting me to come back.

At that point, with there still being no decision made by the credential committee, I decided to go back and pastor a group of people who loved me whether the committee said I could or not. (God had called me there, they did not) Pastor Dryden makes it appear that a “small group of supporters” and I divided the church – that a small minority made the decision for the church . Not True! We lost less than one fourth of the congregation and as already stated, that happened in the very beginning. 9 months later, the church was totally united in asking me to come back.

As to the statement that we : “divided the congregation of the Ezra Church of God from the Anderson Church of God movement of which they had been a part for sixty-five years.”

Quoting from a letter to Arthur Tucker from A.J. Mitchell dated Feb. 8, 1988, A.J. writes:

“I’m sure that you know by now that on October 29, 1987 the Ministerial Credentials Committee of the General Assembly of the Church of God in Illinois decided to disfellowship the Ezra Church of God. We were literally kicked out or “excommunicated” from the Anderson movement because we refused to fire our pastor, Tommy Shelton. “

In his previous letter dated Dec. 13, 1987 A.J. writes” **On October 25, 1985, you advised Brother Tommy to “...cease all activities related to ministries of the Church of God until you are further advised by this committee.” As if that were not enough, you now have told the Ezra Church of God to get rid of our preacher or no longer be on the “approved list”, whatever that means. The most recent letter of November 3, 1987 implies that the General Assemblies of the Church of God in Illinois and Anderson, Indiana will no longer “associate” with the people of the Ezra Church of God. That statement smacks strongly of denominationalism, which is totally uncharacteristic of the Church of God.”**

(This was two years after it all began)

Pastor Dryden speaks as if a the congregation blindly followed me without thought to the past, or to the future. Hear from A.J.’s heart – again from the letter of Dec. 13, 1987 to the Credential Committee – Quote:

“If it were possible (and it is not) I would attempt to convey to you the hurt, embarrassment and disappointment that we feel. Mere words could never do that. You would have to be on the receiving end of the situation. The Ezra Church of God was established on October 13, 1919. Since that time it has been a part of the Anderson based Church of God Reformation movement. Our parents and grandparaents attended the church and were saved under the preaching of

great men and women of the Church of God. Because of that fact, the Church of God is the only church many of us have ever known. Tommy Shelton has been the only pastor that many of our congregation have ever had. We were saved under his preaching and he has been a friend, a brother and pastor. Webster states that the word "pastor" is derived from the word "pascere" which means "to feed." Brother Tommy has fed his flock the word of God for many years. A pastor is likened to the pastor of a flock. In that capacity, Brother Tommy has cared for our people. He has married our young and buried our dead. He has faithfully followed the leadership of the Holy Spirit. He has laughed with us and cried with us, sharing our joy and our misfortune. He has measured out the appropriate proportions of love and discipline, holding true to the Word of God when many Church of God preachers became extremely liberal in their preaching and teaching."

As a congregation we had considered leaving the Anderson movement long before any of this came up for some of the same reasons that the Community Church of God is not part of the Anderson movement. We never took the final step, but it was made for us when the church was ordered to fire me after my credentials were revoked in 1987 (almost two years after it all began).

Pastor Dryden also maintains that I refused to meet with Church of God authorities. I have a letter dated May 26, 1987 from Foster C. Brock, Jr. Chairperson, States Credential's Committee. He writes:

Dear Mr. Shelton:

On June 2, we will be having a State Credential's Committee Meeting at 10:00 AM. Your situation will be discussed again at this meeting. Your presence at this meeting is required so that we might hopefully make some final decision to clear up this matter.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of your presence at this meeting and I thank you for making the effort to be there and in this act we appreciate your cooperation with us.

Sincerely,

Foster Brock

I did attend that meeting. The proof of that can be verified by two sources. First, Bro. James Darden my associate pastor went with me. Secondly I have a letter from my mother dated June 16, 1987 (fourteen days after the meeting) in which she wrote to the Committee. An excerpt from her letter is as follows:

"My son, Tommy Shelton, has just recently returned from a meeting he had with your committee, and told me of the letter you read him saying his father brought charges against him concerning his behavior, and I want to tell you this is the most disgusting lie that has ever been told on anyone?"..... She continued by asking for the name of the person so that that person could be confronted. She never received a response to her letter. - The point being, she states that I had recently returned from a meeting with the committee.

Pastor Dryden mentions three occasions where he invited me to meet with him and his board/committee and I did not respond. That's true, but none of the invitations had to do with allegations.

All three invitations had to do with a letter of apology that the church at Ezra deemed necessary to write to the (IGA) and if I understand right, to be read also at the local campmeeting.

My understanding is that it was a letter from the church apologizing for attitudes/actions during the time, and following the suspension of my credentials.

I had no interest in contributing anything to that action as I believed, and still do, that if an apology was necessary, it should have been from individuals who felt they needed to apologize, not an apology from the church at large. My reasoning? Numbers of people in the congregation NEVER wrote letters of any kind to the (IGA), never mistreated anyone in the other churches and remained Christian throughout the entire ordeal. If a few individuals, who in hindsight, felt they acted unchristian, in my opinion, they should have written their individual apologies.

Far from the need of an apology, the memories of my family and me are the ungodly and unholy things that were

committed against our church, and us personally, in the name of God by other “Christians.” We remember how our church signs on the Highway were sprayed with black paint – how our church was broken into – how our church bus was written all over calling my wife and daughters whores, and the word queer written not only on the church bus, but our house. We remember (check with my children) the nights that we received phone calls in the middle of the night with bomb threats and we had to leave our home, drive down the road and wait for our home to blow up – we remember Gerri Lynn receiving a phone call (she was 9 ½ years old) that she was dead meat – we remember the letters that frequently came trashing our whole family and the church. We also remember how that after I resigned, how that not one minister or church with the exception of Sis. Lucy and Bro. Joe Daniels, ever called Carol to see if we had food, to offer comfort to the kids and her.....nothing!

Quoting again from the letter that A.J. wrote to Arthur Tucker”**It is difficult to comprehend what has happened to our church in the last two years. One of the most disheartening aspects of the entire matter is that few pastors and Christians in the Church of God movement have extended a hand to our church or our pastor.Support from the Church of God pastors in Illinois was virtually non-existent.....Most of us at Ezra have suffered tremendously simply because it seemed that no one cared about our pastor, our people or the future of our church.....**”

A.J.’s words do not sound like the words of someone who needed to repent for his discord, division, ought and strife – as stated in the “apology” statement. I did not respond to Glenn’s letters because I was not interested in any written apology drafted by him, a man who was not there when it happened, who did not suffer the pain that many suffered, which apology was drafted more than 15 years after the fact - after many of the Godly men and women who played major rolls in it all, were already deceased.

Many of those voting to send the apology to (IGA) did not attend Ezra Church of God in the 80’s and knew nothing about any of it until the meeting that was held by Pastor Dryden in 2001.

In that meeting he said that he envisioned revival breaking out when the apology was extended. Instead as a result of the 2001 meeting, some left the church (this is undeniable), others told us personally that “they would not leave – they were there before Pastor Dryden came, and they would be there afterwards and would anxiously awaited his leaving.” There was no revival that broke out, only more hurt over the past, and discord among many in the congregation.

So no, I did not respond to his three invitations to meet with him/committee for reasons stated above. He failed (as far as I know) to tell you, that after an accuser came forward that had not done so in the 80’s that I called Pastor Glenn and ask to read a statement that I had written. The statement was not intended to be an “end all” it was only a first move to open the door for talks. He immediately cut me off and said that if I wanted to talk it would be face to face and in the presence of board members.

My wife can verify the conversation which lasted less than two minutes – even when I said, please, I’m begging you to listen, this is just a beginning.....he uncompassionately cut me off and reaffirmed his earlier position. From that moment I decided I would never be involved in dialogue with anyone in his presence.

Pastor Dryden further states in his letter: “ I will reiterate here that in the case of Tommy Shelton it is my opinion, though there are different congregations in different states, leaders of one “organization” or entity, the corporate church of God, have attempted to bring him to accountability. As a pastor of the church of God I am one of those leaders who have been involved in this attempt. **Tommy Shelton has been approached by leaders of the church of God over an almost twenty year period.** Incomprehensibly, he has succeeded in circumventing church discipline.”

The above paragraph is simply not true. If there have been any efforts since 1987 to bring me to accountability by the Church of God or it’s leadership (other than Glenn Dryden) I nor my wife or children are aware of it, and we demand names and dates to refresh our memory, if it is possible to forget something of that magnitude.

To the contrary, when I surrendered my credentials in 2001 to the Ministerial Council in Virginia, it appeared that no one cared. I didn’t receive an acknowledgement, and neither my family nor I received any phone calls from anyone on the Council offering Gal. 6:1 restoration, or help of any kind. Glenn’s statement that I have been

approached by leaders of the Church of God over a 20 year period is absolutely not true. I was a very visible person in the Church of God. I spoke at numerous revivals and campmeetings each year – or song director or musician at large endeavors – my Bible studies and videos were being used by churches in many states. If I were being sought for 20 years to be brought into accountability, I wouldn't have been hard to find me and I certainly would not have been offered the speaking opportunities that were afforded me, as news travels fast in Church of God circles.

The only leadership trying to do whatever it is he is trying to do, is Glenn Dryden. And my question is, does the Church of God allow a leader, acting on his own, to do all that Pastor Dryden has done to “bring me to accountability?” Has he followed Church of God example?

Has the Church of God, Anderson or Independent, ever put what they believe to be another man's sins on the internet?

Is there precedence in the Church of God for giving negative information to someone of another denomination without checking to know who they are?

Does the Church of God condone a leader sending a letter to the General Conference of the Seventh Day Adventist revealing scandal in the Church of God?

Pastor Dryden not only sent a letter to the General Conference of SDA, but to the Chairman of the Board of 3ABN and to the head of the Hope Channel – another SDA television network. The leaders of the General Conference didn't even know me – I have never been to the Hope Channel and don't know its leader – and the letter to the chairman of the board could only have been to try to take my job. **The Church of God does not operate this way**, and one of its leaders should not either. In truth, many pastors I have spoken with feel he should be disqualified as a leader for following such an unbiblical path.

I will now show you a couple of letters that Pastor Dryden allowed to be published on the internet for the world to see. While reading them, ask yourself, would I want this published about my loved one – husband – child – wife – dad, **even if it were all true**? In my opinion a godly, compassionate man would have handled all of this within the confines of the church, if for no other reasons, than for the sake of Carol, Valerie and Brad, Gerri Lynn and Jason and Rick – people you all know and love. Their lives will never be the same.

If it were all true, think of what they would have already gone through – then for each of them to have to face more humiliation everyday as they meet people who have been on the internet and read Pastor Dryden's letters – no matter how far from home they go.

May 14, 2003

Dr. Walter Thompson

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Dear Dr. Thompson:

Greetings in the holy name of our Lord Jesus!

It is my understanding that you serve as chairman of the board of directors of Three Angels Broadcasting Network. From 3ABN's web site it appears an invitation to minister has been extended to this congregation's former pastor, Tommy Ray Shelton.

Constrained by an ethical, if not legal, obligation, I am compelled to advise you that Tommy Ray Shelton is not in good standing with either of the two associations by which he was first presented with ministerial credentials. At least six boys in our community were sexually abused by Tommy Ray Shelton during the periods he served as pastor of this congregation.

Some of these young men and some parents are willing to corroborate the information I am giving you, if necessary. Please contact me for their phone numbers that I may alert them to a pending call. I also will put you in touch with the two associations referenced above. Either I or members of this congregation's leadership will answer any questions you may have regarding this correspondence.

In our Lord's service,

Pastor Glenn Dryden

ACTION ITEMS SUGGESTED FOR TOMMY SHELTON

Expediency recommended :

Senate Bill 1035 extending statute of limitations goes into effect as soon as signed by Governor Blagojevich. This could be within the next thirty days.

Note <http://www.legis.state.il.us>

Tommy should retain an attorney to represent him as well as to serve him in contacting victims and their families, all at Tommy's expense.

A full disclosure of all victims and details should be made to the Franklin County Sheriff's Office (Investigator Kevin Skurat, 618-435-8187). This disclosure should include pertinent incidences in other states as well as in other jurisdictions in Illinois in addition to Franklin County.

Tommy should cooperate in the placement of his name and pertinent information on appropriate sex offenders lists, as the law may require in the state of his residence or in Illinois.

Tommy should agree to reimburse any of the victims or their family members for the expenses of counseling they have received. He should further agree to pay for any future counseling required by any of the victims or their family members. Contact should be made by his attorney with the victims through their parents if necessary. Pastor Glenn Dryden of the Ezra Church of God (***_**_*_***) should be consulted as to the victims of whom he is aware and as to which of these may be contacted directly. Other victims may wish to maintain anonymity. Apart from necessary contact by law enforcement personnel, their wishes should be respected.

Tommy should issue written apologies over his signature to all victims and to their parents. Again, contact with victims should be made through their parents if necessary.

Tommy also should issue written apologies over his signature for his deceit, as well as inappropriate behavior, etc., to the congregation of the Ezra Church of God, West Frankfort, Illinois, the congregation of the Community Church of God, Dunn Loring, Virginia, the state office of the General Assembly Of The Church Of God In Illinois and to the Ministerial Council of the Church of God headquartered in Virginia.

Subject: FROM PASTOR DRYDEN

Date: **Sun, 3 Dec 2006** 21:03:14 -0500

From: Glenn Dryden

Statement of Pastor Glenn Dryden

Three instances of misconduct on the part of Tommy Shelton while he served as pastor at the Community Church of God, Dunn Loring, Virginia, have been reported to me in the brief time I have served as pastor of this congregation.

The most egregious of these instances involved a male who was a minor at the time.

In another correspondence with the "investigators" he says: You may make public my 2003 letter to Dr. Thompson and action items (which were compiled by the congregation of the Ezra Church of God) and may note that the action items were also sent to Mike Riva, Tommy's attorney, with my reply to his letter of June 13, 2003. **You may note that I gave you my permission to do so.**

Now to my last comment about Pastor Dryden's open letter. **It is my assertion as well that years ago the church [in the corporate sense of our understanding of the church] complied with the principle set forth in Matthew 18:15-17 and concluded Tommy Shelton "be treated like an**

unbeliever” (Contemporary English Version), a “sexually immoral” person (I Corinthians 5).” (his underlining)

“Indeed Tommy Shelton **is** a sexually immoral individual such as the one the Apostle Paul spoke of in I Corinthians 5 and, like that man, is worthy of expulsion from fellowship with the church of God.”

How can a man who has not seen or talked to me in over 6 years say that Tommy Shelton “IS” a sexually immoral individual? For argument sake let’s say that every charge against me is true, how can he know that in the last 6 years I have not repented? The CCOG board has numbers of letters from people at 3ABN who worked with me every day who have testified to my Christian experience and walk with the Lord over these last many years. There has not been one rumor of any kind – sexual immorality, dishonesty, deceit or any other of the sins Glenn accuses me of. How can any man of God say with certainty that I “am” a sexually immoral person. I repeat, if it were all true – do we not believe in repentance and forgiveness? For six years no one has questioned my Christian experience and actually for the six years prior, when I was with you all, you didn’t question it either.

In fact, the vast majority of you sensed the presence of the Holy Spirit in our services, you told me that you learned and were drawn closer to God through our ministry there. I’m not saying that I wasn’t human – not saying that I didn’t have issues that I struggled with – not saying that I didn’t make mistakes – or never miscommunicated something etc. but I was not a sexually immoral person. Check back to what you felt in your own spirit while we were there. Glenn’s statement in this regard is judging and the Bible condemns it. This statement will also make him liable in a court of law as he cannot say I “am” a sexually immoral person without present proof.

O.K., so where do we go from here? Pastor Dryden says since I am a sexually immoral person like Paul talked about in I Cor. 5, I should be expelled from the Church of God.

Does he not realize that already happened 1987 – expelled from the Anderson movement. Then, fellowship was broken with the independent Church of God when I returned my credentials in 2001. Now if that is not enough expulsion, my ministry, name and character was assassinated on the internet by the hand of one man, Glenn Dryden.

In addition to my ruination in the Church of God, I have also been ruined in the Seventh-Day-Adventist Church (world wide, as I ministered in music around the world). Not only is my music ministry ruined among the Adventist, but my two daughter’s ministry is ruined as well.

I can never preach, teach, sing or play in the Church of God or Adventist church again at this point.

In addition, because of the pressure (that your pastor hoped for, **by his own admission**) from the scandalizing on the internet, it was necessary for me to leave my job because of the stress to my heart due to constant high blood pressure. So on top of all of the other expulsions I am expelled from my job, and not able to draw social security until April. If all of this is not **expulsion**, I don’t know what is. But he must want something more for he continues to seek “new evidence” even as late as last week. Although he has stated in 2001 everything “seemed to drop into my lap” he continues seeking. For what purpose??? I AM ALREADY EXPULSED!

As I see it, The Church at Dunn Loring has only one biblical avenue to pursue. The church cannot bring reconciliation between my accusers and me. That can only be accomplished between them and me, and both parties have to want it.

If the Church wants to be the Church, the avenue it must take is to continue beyond

1 Corinthians 5, **to it’s completion** in II Corinthians, chapter 2. In I Corinthians 5, your Pastor has already pointed out that the incestuous (sexually immoral) person should be expelled or as the Amplified Bible calls it, censured. That has already happened.

What the Pastor has failed to point out is that Paul does not leave the sexually immoral person expelled. He tells the church what their responsibility is to that person, and his instructions are clear and found in II Corinthians 2:6-8. Clark’s commentary tie the two passages together beautifully and I give the passage from the Amplified Bible because it so understandable.

Verse 6 – For such a one this censure by the majority (which he has received is) sufficient (punishment). 7. So (instead of further rebuke, now) you should rather turn and (graciously) forgive and comfort and encourage (him), to keep him from being overwhelmed by excessive sorrow and despair. 8. I therefore beg you to reinstate him in your affections and assure him of your love for him; Verse 11 says, “To keep Satan from getting the advantage over us

There you have the Bible path at this point. Glenn says I should be rebuked before all – I have been (before the whole world) – he says I should be treated as an unbeliever – I have been, by him - he says I should be expelled – I have been and much, much more. The only biblical avenue for the church to take is, II Corinthians 2:6-8, and that is where it must end – now – not months down the road as Pastor Dryden suggested in his letter.

Just as Glenn Dryden gave a list of action items for me which included registering as a sex offender and making apologies to Ezra and Dunn Loring etc. I would suggest that there should be some apologies on his part. He should start with my wife and children for the “unnecessary” hurt by his actions on the internet. It would have been painful enough for them had it been handled within the church, but the internet was cruel and unreasonable punishment for them. And it is not over for my family either. An Adventist magazine with thousands of subscribers is planning, and may already have, published an article about me in the coming issue – it’s source of information – Gailon Joy – Gailon’s source, Glenn Dryden. My family has yet to face that humiliation.

He should apologize to the Seventh-day-Adventist church for the confusion and disharmony it has created in its congregations, and to the Churches of God where he has sent letters that have set people against people. This is not to say that if he were convicted by God to handle this issue that he should not have gotten involved. It is to say that there was a Bible way – the internet was not the Bible way – letters to people of other denominations was not the Bible way – calling people on the phone looking for accusations was not the Bible way. Had the Bible way been followed who knows what God might have done. As it is, the brokenness and hurt which has now reached around the world will never all be mended.

One last thought, let’s say I’m innocent, or I am forgiven.....at whose hand will the blood of those souls that may have been saved under my continued ministry, be required? I would fear to be the one who shut down the ministry of one whose fruit in the past 20 years show he was used of God in some measure whether great or small.

I love all of you at the Community Church of God. You know that.... I was with you six years. My family’s and my life are richer and fuller because of our time with you. I am so sorry for all of the pain that this has caused.

Our prayer is that each of you will decide in your heart to follow II Corinthians 2.

Don’t wrestle with guilty or innocent, just determine to follow I Corinthians 5 **to it’s completion** in

II Corinthians 2:6-8 – not just in this matter but in every situation that you may face in the future.

God Bless you individually and the Community Church of God as a whole,

Tommy Shelton

The fish are biting.

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