

Saved by *Jesus* Through 3ABN

Reaching the World for Jesus!

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Beyond Our Wildest Imaginations

I want to express a very heartfelt "Thank you" to all of you who have faithfully supported 3ABN with your prayers and finances. It's hard to believe 23 years have passed since God created this ministry! It seems like just yesterday the Lord impressed me that He wanted to build a television network to "reach the world with the undiluted three angels' messages that would counteract the counterfeit!" That was on November 14, 1984.

At the time, I was a 33-year-old carpenter and part-time gospel singer. I had no money, no education in television communication, and no idea what it would take financially (or otherwise) to build such a network. In fact, satellite communication was in its infancy in 1984, and even secular networks had yet to employ this technology to reach the entire world. Still, I never doubted the sound of the Lord's voice—it was strong in my ears. I knew, because God wanted to deliver His final message to the world, He would make certain the vision of this television network would become a reality.

God put a fire in my soul! With youthful enthusiasm, I began visiting churches to share the vision. The one consideration I forgot to factor in was that God uses the foolish things of the world to confound the wise (1 Corinthians 1:27)—and confound them, He did! Many, including church leaders, were opposed to this plan. Why didn't they catch the vision and join hands to make this network a reality? They were looking at me! All they saw was a 33 year-old carpenter with only a high school education and no money. I'm sure it seemed like a blueprint for failure!

The early days were a wrestling match, but I knew that I wasn't wrestling against flesh and blood—it was against the powers of darkness (Ephesians 6:12) that wanted to devour this vision before it got off the ground. Instead of looking at the need for a worldwide broadcast of the truths entrusted to Seventh-day Adventists, some could look no further than the individual. What did they see? An imperfect human being—inexperienced for the work required. Others recognized the need, but believed it would be better filled by the organized church, rather than laity.

Certain church and lay leadership sent people to our home town to investigate this Shelton family who were claiming to build a broadcast network to present truth to a lost and dying world. As reports began spreading about laymen who were supporting us, stories also began circulating to discourage church members from financing an "independent" television ministry. Some stories had a lot of error mixed in with a little truth. Some stories had a lot of truth mixed with a little error. The word put out on the streets was that we were not deemed fit or capable of building and running a television network to reach the world.

But what seemed impossible to man was not a challenge for God. The Lord confounded the wise even further, by using their opposition for our good. Stories labeling us as uneducated, insolvent dreamers spread like wildfire, stirring curiosity among church members. We couldn't have paid for that much publicity! People who would have never otherwise heard about this new station began writing and sending their love gifts. On the wings of the opposition's talebearing, God spread the vision of the worldwide network that would carry His end-time message via satellite, cable, and UHF TV stations.

"For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth" (2 Corinthians 13:8). Isn't that incredible? It gives us the calm assurance that as long as we are doing what God has called us to do, we will succeed. So, don't be discouraged. Even if folk around you are saying all manner of evil against you, God is on your side. He will empower you to accomplish that which He has called you to do! Today, 23 years later, 3ABN is one of the most far-reaching television networks in the world! We beam satellite signals to all the continents of Planet Earth, except Antarctica! People around the world watch and listen to 3ABN (English), 3ABN Latino (in Spanish and Portuguese), 3ABN Russia, and 3ABN Radio. Glory to God!

Since our inception, 3ABN's programming has impacted the lives of hundreds of thousands of people worldwide. At a recent 3ABN Camp Meeting, Pastor Jim Gilley (former assistant to the president of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists) shared these statistics with us: in 1984, before 3ABN started, there were an estimated five to six million Adventists worldwide; today that figure has grown to fifteen million Adventists. Our church growth has exploded in the last twenty years. Elder Gilley attributes the impact of 3ABN's worldwide network as one of the main reasons for this growth!

Since 1997, 3ABN has enjoyed a formal working agreement with the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists to support each other in

proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ to the whole world. Our network is accepted as a supporting ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Does this mean that 3ABN no longer has opposition from within the church and outside the church? Absolutely not! I can tell you that 3ABN has never been under more attack from the devil than we are now.

"The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). The doomsayers forget a simple truth—God's blessing on 3ABN is because of the message, not the messengers! If God required perfect messengers, the world would be in trouble! None of us is perfect. We are all humble sinners saved by grace! I suppose if the current 3ABN leadership continues to run a debt-free, 24/7 broadcasting ministry reaching millions of homes with the gospel over the next 23 years, there will still be doubters!

We should have an attitude of acceptance when people assail us. Why? Jesus said, "A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20). We're in good company! Christ was despised and rejected by His own people—they even crucified Him. He was perfect, yet suffered more than all of us combined as He carried the sins of the world on His shoulders.

"Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's" (2 Chronicles 20:15). The good news is that God will again give us the victory! He is alive and well, and He is still on the throne. Christ is coming back in the clouds of glory very soon to take His children home. Let's pray for each other, that we will keep focused on the calling that God has given us as a church and a people—to proclaim the three angels' messages of Revelation 14 to the ends of the earth so that Jesus can come quickly!

As we celebrate our 23rd anniversary, we recognize that we are poised for explosive growth! God has opened doors that will make 3ABN a household name within the United States over the next couple of years. A new children's network is being planned. The opportunities being presented to us are beyond our wildest imaginations, but God has had it planned all along.

"In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will" (Ephesians 1:11). We know God has incredible plans for the ministry of 3ABN. As the enemy steps up his assault against us to try to stop the life-changing messages that expose him and point people to their Savior, we know that he is a defeated foe, because he is fighting against the counsel of God's will.

It is my prayer that God's children—our 3ABN family—will rally around God's plans for this ministry, remembering that "greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). We pray you will step up your commitment to help us with your prayers and financial support. Let's take this gospel of the kingdom into all the world, so that the end may come!

Danny Shelton

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