



NEWS

[Front Page](#)

[Local](#)

[Sports](#)

▶ [Bengals](#)

▶ [Reds](#)

▶ [Bearcats](#)

▶ [Xavier](#)

[Business](#)

[Health](#)

[Technology](#)

[Weather](#)

[Traffic](#)

[Back Issues](#)

[Photographs](#)

[AP Wire](#)

▶ [World](#)

▶ [Nation](#)

▶ [Sports](#)

▶ [Business](#)

▶ [Arts](#)

▶ [Health](#)

CLASSIFIEDS

[Jobs](#)

[Autos](#)

[General](#)

[Obits](#)

[Homes](#)

FREETIME!

[Movies](#)

[Dining](#)

[Calendars](#)

[Weekend](#)

OPINION

[Columns](#)

[Borgman](#)

HELPSK

[HelpDesk](#)

[Feedback](#)

[Circulation](#)

[Subscribe](#)

[Phone #'s](#)

[Search](#)

 [You can trust Cincinnati.Com advertisers. Click here!](#)

ENQUIRER LOCAL NEWS COVERAGE

Jury gets minister's abuse case

Friday, October 2, 1998

BY **JANICE MORSE**
The Cincinnati Enquirer

HAMILTON -- A Butler County jury will resume deliberations today, deciding the fate of a Middletown minister accused of sexually molesting his daughter.

After Thursday's final arguments, jurors began deliberations around 11 a.m. They continued their work until 7 p.m.

They will decide whether the Rev. Darrell S. Bell, a longtime preacher and steelworker, is guilty of molesting his daughter repeatedly from the time she was 10 until she turned 18 and went away to Bowling Green State University.

The Rev. Mr. Bell is charged with six counts of rape, three counts of felonious sexual penetration and five counts of sexual battery. The 44-year-old Middletown man is an AK Steel employee who has been associate pastor of Bethlehem Temple First Pentecostal Church. He also has conducted services at his home on Eighth Avenue in Middletown, calling the congregation the Whole Life Family Assembly. He has been a clergyman for 25 years.

Generally, The Cincinnati Enquirer -->does not identify complaining witnesses in child molestation cases. However, the complainant in this case, Dawn Bell, now 20, consented Thursday to disclosing her name, saying, "I want to be an example for other women."

Her father denies he has molested her or anyone else.

In closing arguments Thursday, assistant county prosecutor Patricia Downing explained why there were no eyewitnesses and why the case boiled down to the Rev. Mr. Bell's word against his daughter's. "It's a crime of seduction of a child. It's a secret crime . . . sometimes it goes on for years and years undetected. That's what happened in this case," she said.

Ms. Downing also pointed out that none of the witnesses testified that the Rev. Mr. Bell denied the allegations to them. During a conversation with his son, Darrell S. Bell II, the Rev. Mr. Bell allegedly said he was sorry that his son, visiting from college, had to be there during all of the turmoil.

"What he says is significant. But what, to me, is more significant: He never said to his son, 'I didn't do it,' " Ms. Downing said. "He gave a rationalization: 'I was abused.' "

The Rev. Mr. Bell denied making that statement. He testified that the conversation with his son focused on education, not abuse allegations. The preacher also denied saying he'd been a victim of sexual abuse.

Defense lawyer Robert Bostick said Dawn Bell's statements conflicted with the other witnesses' testimony because her allegations were false.

The only document suggesting possible molestation was an October 1988 report from Middletown Regional Hospital. Dawn Bell was examined there when she was 10 after complaining of abdominal pain and an unusual vaginal discharge. She was diagnosed with a yeast infection. The report, which bears the Rev. Mr. Bell's signature, reads, "No documented history of sexual activity, but stepmother isn't entirely sure."

Holding that report, Ms. Downing told the jury: "A 10-year-old that's sexually active? Somebody should've been looking into that. They missed it. It was there."

Mr. Bostick questioned why his client would have taken his daughter to the hospital and signed the examination report if he had been abusing her.

Local Headlines For Friday, October 2, 1998

[CLINTON - STARR COVERAGE](#)

[A remnant of slavery's horror](#)

[CAMPAIGN NOTEBOOK](#)

[Counseling for hearing impaired gets easier](#)

[Deters has strong opponent in treasurer's race](#)

[Even boulders need TLC](#)

[Feds aid local police](#)

[Florence has \\$600,000 surplus](#)

[Foundation honors volunteer](#)

[Franklin 'confession' stands](#)

[Franklin student arrested after bomb call](#)

[Gingrich: Clinton turmoil shouldn't be campaign issue](#)

[Heston does ad for Williams](#)

[Iguana seeks good home](#)

[Jury gets minister's abuse case](#)

[Letter might backfire on Kenton jailer](#)

[Man fatally stabbed in street fight](#)

[Mason firefighters put split behind them](#)

[Miles guilty of brothers' murders](#)

[School stays closed for asbestos work](#)

[She's at home at the helm](#)

[Stampede of Slaves](#)

[Tristate chill can harm plants](#)

[TRISTATE DIGEST](#)

[Two 15-year-olds indicted for murder, robbery](#)

[Two plead guilty in pot case](#)

[United Way passes halfway mark](#)

[Weapons, fights at courthouse increasing rapidly](#)

[Welfare reform turns to toughest cases](#)

[Woman ordered to treatment for role in grandson's death](#)

[Search](#) | [Questions/help](#) | [News tips](#) | [Letters to the editors](#)
[Web advertising](#) | [Place a classified](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Circulation](#)

[Copyright](#) 1995-2000. [The Cincinnati Enquirer](#), a [Gannett Co. Inc.](#) newspaper.
Use of this site signifies agreement to [terms of service](#) updated 4/5/2000.