

Group continues to battle Tilton

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DALLAS — A non-profit foundation that has battled with televangelist Robert Tilton since last fall is asking media outlets nationwide for equal time to respond to allegations in a show produced by Tilton's ministry.

Stephen Gardner, an attorney representing the Trinity Foundation and its president Ole Anthony, transmitted a letter late Wednesday to 140 television stations and networks that have been airing Tilton's one-hour show, "Prime Time Lies — Anatomy of an Expose."

The letter contends statements made in the show about the Trinity Foundation and Anthony are

Foundation urges media nationwide for equal time to respond to allegations

libelous and slanderous.

Anthony contends Tilton's ministry has tried to discredit him "in the eyes of the public, and most importantly in the eyes of the legal authorities who are investigating Robert Tilton" ever since he helped ABC-TV's "PrimeTime Live" with an unflattering segment on the televangelist's Farmers Branch ministry.

"Basically we tried to ignore these charges. If you haven't seen Prime Time Lies, I hope you don't. It's a terrible, terrible program and everything in it is a

lie," Anthony said.

Dan Moroso, executive producer of television ministry for Tilton, said: "We expected this sort of response from Mr. Anthony. The man lives in a state of denial. Everything that he says publicly or does publicly to harm the church, he then denies."

"The merit of the investigative report that we did rests on the truth. And that truth is well-documented, with evidence, including his own testimony — written and recorded — and we feel that the viewers should decide where the truth lies."

Tilton's Tulsa, Okla.-based attorney, J.C. Joyce did not immediately return a phone call from The Associated Press.

The media outlets have been given until Wednesday to respond in writing to the request for equal time, and more stations possibly will receive the letter, the foundation said. The foundation believes the show has been airing since August.

A lawsuit is possible, Anthony said, if the request is ignored.

In a statement read during a Thursday news conference by Harry Guetzlaff, a member of the foundation's board of directors,

See Tilton/Page 3

Perot to put issues in focus, son says

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DALLAS — Ross Perot's supporters are telling volunteer leaders who will meet with him Monday they want him back in the presidential race. But Perot's son and other associates say his goal is not to win the presidency but to force the campaign onto "the tough issues."



Perot

In several interviews during the past week, Perot has suggested he would launch an active campaign if supporters who put him on state ballots want him to do so.

And Orson Swindle, national coordinator for Perot's volunteer organization, said Thursday that a canvass he ordered of state offices found plenty of backing if Perot decides to run.

"This is not a token gesture," Swindle said on NBC's "Today" show. "If he goes for the presidency, he goes for the presidency."

But Perot's son, Ross Perot Jr., said his father's goal "is not to be president of the United States."

"His goal is to fix the country, fix some problems, to keep the two candidates really focused in on what the problems are," Perot Jr. told KDFW-TV.

"And he wants to make sure they can't avoid the tough issues."

Earlier this week, former media adviser Jim Squires said Perot had no illusions of winning the election, but might begin running ads and making speeches in states such as Texas and Florida, where he might affect the outcome.

Perot's advertising consultant, Murphy Martin, said the spots he has prepared for Perot focus on issues rather than the man.

Asked if the spots use graphical material, Martin said: "That's not really the purpose. We're talking about problems that face the country, how to solve those problems and who can do that."

When he was asked whether the spots say "Vote for Perot," Martin said, "They say what's necessary to relay the message and that's all I can say."

Perot has scheduled meetings with coordinators of his 50-state ballot access drive Monday and will appear that night on CNN's "Larry King Live."

Swindle on Wednesday ordered state coordinators to a formal sweep but others contacted hundreds of people. For instance, Idaho leaders of Perot's organization, United We Stand America, reported 3,000 responses to its survey, nearly all in favor of Perot joining the race, said Mark Guidry in Boise.

The Connecticut chapter told Perot supporters by telephone that the 300 who responded by Thursday afternoon, 86 percent said they wanted Perot to get back in the race, said Dennis Schraug in Hartford.

In some other states, such as Texas and Tennessee, canvasses were not as systematic, leaders said.

"We've been calling around asking people what they wanted," said Steve Fridrich, coordinator in Nashville. "I'm hearing the people want him to get in, but they want him to get in in the real soon."

There were discouraging words from the former head of Perot's petition drive in Illinois, however. "He had his one chance and amazingly b'lew it," said David Charlson.

Policeman recovers after being shot at school

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HOUSTON — A police officer wounded last week during a shooting at an elementary school said he believes it was a blessing he happened to be there when the gunman opened fire.

Police Officer Lowell Nienast was at Piney Point Elementary School last Friday to present a drug-awareness program when a father apparently upset about his son's grades fired 14 shots on the campus.

Nienast was shot twice, and another officer called to the scene also was wounded.

Calvin Charles Bell, 44, has been charged in the shootings.

Clad in pajamas and robe and sitting in his wheelchair at Methodist Hospital, Nienast said Wednesday that other law enforcement officers would have reacted the same way he did.

"They did great, the kids," Nienast said. "I'm glad it was me and not the kids."

Nienast, 29, a police officer for seven years, said it was "kind of a blessing I was there," since Friday's trip was for a special assignment and not his regularly

"They did great, the kids. I'm glad it was me and not the kids."

—Lowell Nienast
Houston Police Officer

scheduled day to be at the school.

"I knew I was the only one at the building who could have done something," he said. "I had to do what I could do."

Nienast is expected to be released in a couple of days and be back at work in six weeks to two months, said Dr. Robert John-

ston. Bell is being held in Harris County Jail and has been ordered to undergo a psychiatric evaluation to determine if he is fit to stand trial on two counts of attempted capital murder and three counts of aggravated assault.

Earlier Wednesday, Bell's brother, Benjamin Bell, and wife, Beaula Pearlita Bell, apologized for the shooting and pleaded for compassion for Bell, saying he was mentally unstable.

Bell's lawyer, George J. Parnham, said the Vietnam veteran previously had been hospitalized at the Veteran's Administra-

tion Medical Center for psychiatric treatment.

The shooting has stunned the suspect's family and friends, who described Bell as a cheerful, friendly, altruistic person who participated in field trips at school.

"He's not a violent person. He's never raised a hand," Mrs. Bell said.

The family said the rampage may have occurred because Bell quit taking an antidepressant drug that the family could no longer afford.

Until the shooting, Mrs. Bell said she thought the medication was sleeping pills and did not know her husband was mentally unstable.

"Our whole family has been traumatized by this. This is a nightmare. I'm asking you to forgive him. . . . He is a decent guy," Benjamin Bell said.

Minister sues for damages

Preacher claims agency should not have revealed his name

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUSTIN — A Presbyterian minister has sued the Texas Department of Human Services for telling a couple that he expressed concerns about them in a child abuse allegation.

The Rev. Ned Benson said he was asked to resign as minister at Austin's First Presbyterian Church and that his reputation was harmed because of the action by DHS.

Benson said that if DHS doesn't protect the identities of all who participate in child abuse investigations then many people may be hesitant to help officials in their work.

In April 1990, Benson told a child protective services specialist that he had concerns about a couple in his congregation — a father and stepmother to two small boys — who he knew were under investigation for abuse. Benson says he was assured that, by law, his identity would be kept confidential.

But in October 1990, DHS gave the couple a 200-page file with the names of people who had talked to investigators about them.

In February 1991, the couple filed a \$1 million slander suit against Benson and the 650-member church. They also instigated a formal church investigation of his actions. Soon after, Benson was asked to resign.

The couple eventually dropped the suit against Benson, and the suit against the congregation was dismissed.

The church investigation of Benson ended in a no-fault finding. But Benson says the state has harmed his reputation and ability to earn a living.

He wants unspecified monetary damages as well as a ruling requiring the agency to stop revealing the names of informants in child abuse cases.

Texas law requires people to call state officials or law enforcement whenever they have "cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect."

DHS brochures, in fact, state that "those who report abuse are promised confidentiality and immunity from civil or criminal prosecution" as long as suspicions are reported "without malice."

DHS officials, while not commenting on specifics of the case, did acknowledge exceptions to the confidentiality rules.

Essentially, those who call to report abuse are guaranteed protection, unless a court orders the name released.

If, however, a person's name has been given to investigators as a reference, or what the agency calls "a collateral source," that source's name and comments are available for public inspection.

Greyhound plans to close facilities in South Texas; legal actions ensue

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BROWNSVILLE — A South Texas bus company says it will be forced out of business if Greyhound Lines Inc. follows through with plans to evict the line from terminals throughout the state.

Valley Transit Co. has filed an antitrust suit and is asking a federal judge for a temporary restraining order prohibiting Greyhound from closing its facilities to the Harlingen-based line at midnight Sept. 30.

If U.S. District Judge Filemon Vela grants the order at a hearing Friday, a second court date will likely be scheduled so VTC can seek a permanent injunction, said company attorney Rene Oliveira.

The company, under the suit filed Wednesday, also is seeking to prevent Greyhound from taking future alleged monopolistic actions, such as unreasonably raising rent at facilities statewide, Oliveira said.

Greyhound spokeswoman Elizabeth Dunn declined to comment Thursday on the suit, saying company officials had not yet seen the pleadings.

VTC Senior Vice President Robert Farris said his company, which provides intercity and commuter service, would be crippled if it was locked out of terminals in Houston, Corpus Christi and San Antonio.

The company will quickly go bankrupt without the \$2.9 million in annual revenue that comes from providing connections with Greyhound-Trailways buses traveling to distant cities and states, according to an affidavit.

"It will also force us to layoff several hundred loyal, excellent employees. . . ." Farris said.

Valley Transit handled more than two million passengers last year and served more than 70 communities in Texas, Farris said.

He said VTC's passengers are primarily lower-income Hispanic women without transportation.

VTC's fleet of buses include none over four years old and all of its drivers speak both English and Spanish, reasons that many Rio Grande Valley residents prefer to use VTC for connecting trips to major cities, he said.

The lawsuit claims that since Greyhound bought out Trailways, it has abandoned many stops in South Texas, some on one or two days' notice. Greyhound officials have accused VTC drivers of selling passenger business in Houston, an alleged violation of an operating agreement.

There have also been disputes over Greyhound signs on VTC terminals and over package shipping service, the lawsuit states.

The Battalion

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VIP Research is seeking individuals 12 years of age or older with uncomplicated skin and skin structure infections. If you have a skin infection, you may qualify for a four week research study using a currently available antibiotic medication. Participants who qualify and complete the study will be paid \$200.

GENITAL HERPES STUDY

Individuals with genital herpes infection are being recruited for a 3 week research study of an investigational anti-viral medication. If you would like to find out more about this study, call VIP Research. \$400 will be paid to qualified volunteers who enroll and complete this study.

ACNE STUDY

VIP Research is conducting an ACNE research study with a reformulation of a currently available topical anti-acne medication in gel form. If you are 13 to 40 years old and have mild-to-moderate facial acne, you may qualify for this study and receive up to \$150 for your participation. No blood drawn.

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Everyone is invited to services conducted by Rabbi Peter Tarlow

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Tuesday Sept. 29 - 10 am

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