



Florida & International Corporate & Financial Fraud Investigators

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BODY:

Whew! I've taken heat before, but I've never seen such vengeance after writing about what U.S. authorities are warning could be a pyramid scam involving tapes and seminars to teach wealth creation through offshore trusts.

Since my column last Tuesday, I've since learned Attorney Generals in Michigan, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Massachusetts, Nebraska and Missouri have slapped cease and desist orders on Global Prosperity Group. Washington State has launched an enquiry into Global, after the Attorney General's consumer protection department received almost 50 complaints. In Ontario, complaints are now surfacing, confirmed police Det. Dave Turnbull, with Ontario's Illegal Gaming Enforcement Unit.

My phone lines and e-mail were burning up. The bulk of callers were "retailers" for Global, which in its literature claims you can easily become a millionaire selling their products to new members.

"Do not insult people by printing non-truths," said one e-mail. Another griped, "After reading your article today, my inclination for not believing everything I read has been strengthened." Another chastised, "Use your head, Linda. Get the facts. Cease and desist orders are on Global Prosperity Group, not the Institute of Global Prosperity."

Well, here are the facts.

The two founders of Global Prosperity Group are Dan Andersen of Fitchburg, Mass., and Dave Struckman of Renton, Wash., who are both the founders of The Institute of Global

Prosperity, along with Zo LaMantia. It is additionally alleged that the companies are also known as GPG, Global Prosperity Marketing Group, GPMG, the Global Group and now known as the Institute of Global Prosperity -- which is busily recruiting new members in Canada.

As I noted on Tuesday, what all those companies are selling are a series of seminars starting with something called Global 1, for a price of US\$ 1,250, Global II at US\$ 6,250; and Global III at US\$ 18,750 -- as well as a Platinum Program. Some of these are held offshore, mainly in Cancun.

The only difference between some of these companies, besides the slight name changes, is that controversial and fervently religious Keith Anderson, who is the host of the 10-hour audio-cassette program, called Gateway To Financial Freedom is no longer involved. However, the Institute of Global Prosperity is still selling his cassettes.

Struckman is also alleged to be involved in a Florida-based company, called Pro-Step, which helps multi-level marketing plans find leads.

Meanwhile, Martin Cordell, a securities examiner for Washington's department of financial institutions, wants to talk to Struckman but has failed to make contact. Anyone with information can call Cordell at 1-360-902-8732, or e-mail him at mcordell@dfi.wa.gov.

Now, I have read the transcripts of the 12 tapes and I'll agree with some statements made in the seminars. Some corporations have grown so large and established monopolies and are acting like communist dictators because they can get away with it, but I can't condone teaching people to rip up social insurance numbers, driving a car without a licence, and not paying tax.

These evangelical teachings of Global Prosperity are hiding what I suspect is a pyramid scam. And the real blinded people are those who are hurting others, as they lust to get rich. Now, founder Andersen's attorney, in a published news report, denied any wrongdoing. But I still think it's wrong.

"I lost \$ 40,000," sighed one disgruntled associate who bought all the seminars. Another caller feared her 63-year-old husband was going to invest his entire RRSP portfolio. "That's all the money we have. It's a Locked-In Retirement Account but they sent him forms so he could get at the money. This has put a strain on our marriage."

Also on the line was a father whose son had called me last week, worried he may become a victim. But Dad told me that after attending a seminar, he didn't give them a dime. "I don't like high taxes, but I still believe in paying them," he said. Smart cookie.

As a U.S. federal regulator said "it's a huge money machine that's making the people at the top very rich."