



# COMMISSION NEWS

ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION, 1200 W. WASHINGTON, PHOENIX, AZ 85007

TO: EDITORS, NEWS DIRECTORS  
FOR: IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **PROMOTERS OF BELIEVING IN JESUS INVESTMENTS UNDER SCRUTINY**

PHOENIX – The Arizona Corporation Commission’s Securities Division issued a temporary cease and desist order against Believing in Jesus Investments, LLC, an investment program being offered to church members by its promoters, 45-year-old Phoebus Vincent Smith and 53-year-old Sharon Elizabeth Govan, all from Peoria. The public should be on notice that it is against the law to offer or sell these investments in Arizona while the temporary order is in effect.

The Securities Division believes that Smith, also known as “Mr. Vince,” and Govan are promoting fraudulent investment programs through fliers and live presentations to fellow church members in the West Valley – all in the name of God. Smith and Govan tell potential investors that the purpose of Believing in Jesus Investments is to invest in raw land, real estate development, condominiums, luxury cars, new business ventures, and bulk merchandise.

Prior to investing, potential investors are required to purchase one of four different types of “memberships” in Believing in Jesus Investments, each with a non-refundable fee attached. Two of the memberships entitled “Christian Millionaires in Training 1 and 2” target children, teenagers, single parents and individuals who earn less than \$20,000 per year.

In its promotional materials, Believing in Jesus Investments solicits investors to enroll in a variety of investment programs with “guaranteed” returns ranging from 25 to 100 percent. The program also offers members up to a \$250 referral fee if they recruit others to enroll as members.

Arizona is not the only state scrutinizing the respondents and the Believing in Jesus investment programs. In January 2005, the State of California’s Department of Corporations issued an order against Smith and his former spouse, Sandra Gail Smith, for similar conduct. The State of California alleged that the

respondents conducted a Ponzi scheme, using new investor money to pay off earlier investors of the program. Similar to Arizona, the California authorities also alleged that Smith and Govan targeted church members.

The Securities Division alleges that Smith and Govan failed to inform investors about the order in California. Additionally, the Division alleges that the respondents have used investor funds for personal use.

Although Believing in Jesus Investments is registered as a limited liability company with the Commission, it is not registered to offer or sell securities in Arizona.

The Commission's temporary order allows the respondents to request a hearing and/or respond to the Commission's allegations. The respondents have 20 calendar days to request a hearing and 30 days to file a response.

### **Caution for Investors**

Even if you are investing with someone from your religious or ethnic community, the Commission urges the public to contact your state securities regulator to check whether both the seller and investment are registered. Entrusting your money with someone for investment purposes, while expecting a profit through the efforts of others, may involve a security and sales agents/dealers subject to registration. **VERIFY BEFORE YOU BUY!** Call the Securities Division, (602) 542-4242, toll free (866) VERIFY-9. The Division's investor education web site also has helpful information at [www.azinvestor.gov](http://www.azinvestor.gov).

The text of the orders and related documents are posted at <http://www.ccsd.cc.state.az.us/enforcement/enforce-orders.asp>. All public documents related to the cases can be viewed and/or printed through the Commission's e-Docket system. The case or docket number assigned to the Believing in Jesus Investments matter is S-20478A-06-0565.

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