



Fraudulent Solicitation for Victory Orphan Centre International

Email Fundraising Scam that Donors Need to Avoid

By Rod Pitzer

The Issues:

An email solicitation is being circulated requesting donations to Victory Orphan Centre International. The email also purports that:

- They help orphans
- They need your help
- They are a nonprofit corporation
- They are tax-exempt under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3)
- Their EIN is 54-7775430
- They use Scripture versus to plead for help

Analysis Applied:


The following organizations were contacted or research performed on June 29, 2004 to verify the purported information:

- The Internal Revenue Service, Cincinnati, OH Exempt Organization division at (877) 829-5500. They had no record of an exempt organization with the EIN of 54-7775430, or with the name Victory Orphan Centre International (or slight variations of the name).
- Searched www.guiedestar.com for the EIN and name in question and neither were found.
- Commonwealth of Virginia, State Corporation Commission at (804) 371-9733. The Commission had no record of a corporation with this name or even slightly similar. The EIN number while a federal number, would indicate that it was issued from a service center in Virginia, but there is no evidence that it is incorporated in Virginia.
- Virginia Office of Consumer Affairs database was searched for the particular name and similar variations and no name was found.
- An Internet search was performed on www.google.com and the name in question was not found.
- A follow-up email to get additional information to the original was never answered.

Conclusion:

Based upon a reasonable degree of certainty, Victory Orphan Centre International, or slight versions of the name is fake and no one should give to it or contact the organization in any way.

Background:

Based upon a reasonable degree of probability this email scam is related to what is referred to as a Nigerian Scam, or The 419 Fraud. These fraud schemes are often very creative and innovative. Unfortunately, there is a perception that no one is prone to enter into such an obviously suspicious relationship. However, a large number of victims are enticed every year. In the past the Secret Service has collected and investigated these type of scams. Unfortunately, because of a lack of cooperation from overseas countries and shifting priorities, the Secret Service office that handled these cases has been closed. The Secret Service's advice as of June 29, 2004 was to encourage us to educate others about this scam and encourage all to ignore it and just delete the bogus email solicitations. 

Contact Information and Resources

Government Contacts

Christian Ministry Marketplace

Secular Resources

Internal Revenue Service

Exempt organization customer service address:
Internal Revenue Service
TE/GE Customer Account Services
P.O. Box 2508
Cincinnati, OH 45201

- Tax-exempt assistance: 1-877-829-5500
- General tax questions: 1-800-829-1040
- Order forms and publications: 1-800-829-3676
- Website: www.irs.gov
- Verify tax-exempt status
- Verify tax deductibility
- Obtaining federal tax-exempt status
- Completing federal tax forms
- Specialized assistance to tax-exempt organizations

Attorneys General offices, or Departments of Justice, Charitable Activities Section

Most states have an active unit of the Attorney General's office that are willing to help consumers. Check with NASCO (National Association of State Charities Officials) at www.NASCOnet.org, look under US State Charity Offices and click on the state of interest.

- Reporting illegal activity by nonprofit organizations
- Information about charitable organizations and copies of annual reports
- Questions about professional fundraising reporting requirements
- Registrations of charitable corporations or trusts
- Questions about annual reports for charitable organizations
- Merging nonprofit organizations
- Serving as a board member of a nonprofit organization
- Dissolving nonprofit organizations

Secretary of State, Corporation Division

Check phone number on the Internet or your local phonebook under state government.

- Verifying that a nonprofit corporation is in fact incorporated and current in its filing
- Obtaining copies of filed articles of incorporation and amendments
- Forming a new corporation
- Obtaining state identification numbers
- Merging nonprofit corporations
- Amending articles of incorporation
- Dissolving nonprofit corporations

Federal Trade Commission

Consumer Response Center
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20580
1-877-382-4357
Website: www.ftc.gov

- Information on fraudulent, deceptive and unfair business practices
- How to file a complaint

MinistryWatch.com

1 (866) 324-7097
www.ministrywatch.com
A free donor advocate service. Aid donors in understanding the key issues concerning a ministry's operations. Ministry research reports on over 500 ministries.

The Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA)

1 (800) 323-9473
www.ecfa.org
A membership ministry advocate. A self regulator or peer accountability membership group. Primary responsibility to the ministries that pay dues to the ECFA and thereby fund its operations.

www.theGoodSteward.com

Internet source of constantly growing information on all areas of stewardship.

Generous Giving

www.generousgiving.org
Nonprofit that seeks to encourage givers of all income levels to experience the joy of giving and embrace a lifestyle of generosity, according to God's word and Christ's example. It was launched in 2000 by the Maclellan Foundation.

Royal Treasure

1 (770) 977-4502
www.royaltreasure.org
Nonprofit organization dedicated to teaching Biblical Stewardship to women.

The Gathering

www.gatheringweb.com
Conferences, email forums, conference calls and other activities for those that give a minimum of \$200,000 annually to Christian ministries or have the capacity to do so.

National Christian Foundation

1 (800) 681-6223
www.nationalchristian.com
Facilitates Christian stewardship. They can help donors set up a Stewardship Fund, a donor advised fund, liquidate assets, provide gift annuities, trusts, scholarships, and endowments.

Calvin Edwards, & Co.

1 (770)-395-9425
CalvinEdwards@MaximumGood.com
For profit organization providing philanthropic counsel to high-capacity Christian donors.

Geneva Global

1 (610) 254-8202
info@GenevaGlobal.com
www.genevaglobal.com
For profit organization assisting individual donors.

Excellence in Giving

1 (866) 780-1000
www.excellenceingiving.com
For profit organization with tailored services of affluent families and individuals.

The Legacy Group

1 (262) 789-3160
www.philanthropyatwork.com
For profit organization to assist private wealth management and those to achieve charitable goals.

GuideStar

www.guidestar.org
Largest public search engine of nonprofit organizations. Provides access to many tax-exempt organization's IRS Form 990s. Some knowledge of accounting may be necessary to understand the documents found on this site.

BBB Wise Giving Alliance

www.give.org
A charitable watchdog site. The Alliance reports on nationally soliciting charitable organizations that are the subject of donor inquiries. These reports include an evaluation of the subject charity in relation to the voluntary BBB charity standards.

Charity Navigator

www.charitynavigator.org
Helps guide intelligent giving by evaluating the financial health of each charity in its database.

Charity Channel

www.charitychannel.com
Known best for its nonprofit email arena discussion forums.

The American Institute of Philanthropy

www.charitywatch.org
A charitable watchdog group that rates US charities in different categories. Fee for reports. They also provide tips to insure safe giving.

The Charities Review Council

www.crcmn.org
Conducts detailed reviews of national and local charitable organizations soliciting in the State of Minnesota. They also provide tips and guides for donors to help them make wise giving decisions.

Internet Nonprofit Center

www.nonprofits.org
Provides an extensive array of nonprofit topics.

Independent Sector

www.independentsector.org
A national leadership forum, working to encourage philanthropy, volunteering, nonprofit initiative and citizen action that help to better serve people and communities. There is a section on ethics and accountability, including donor's bill of rights, related publications, articles and other resources.

Chronicle of Philanthropy

www.philanthropy.com
Biweekly newspaper of the nonprofit world.

The Nonprofit Times

www.nptimes.com
Articles and topics related to nonprofits.

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www.ministrywatch.com
www.wallwatchers.org
www.thegoodsteward.com