

# Eddie Long Co-Defendant Says He's Not 'Just Another Greedy Businessman'

Ephren Taylor Jr., the man named in a lawsuit alongside Bishop Eddie Long and New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in Lithonia, Ga., is trying to set the record straight.

The North Carolina businessman who presented an investment scheme to New Birth's members that allegedly resulted in 10 church members losing \$1 million says he's taking steps to correct the issue.

The New Birth members claim Long encouraged them to invest in what appears to be a Ponzi scheme. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, the scheme promised 20 percent annual returns on safe investments. Investors reportedly didn't know their money was being diverted to a failing company.

"In my case and that of my former company, some of the negative effects of a situation with very complex economics impacted businesses, individuals and families despite our best intentions," Taylor said in a statement to The Associated Press. "Don't assume that I am just another greedy businessman. I am taking action to make things right."

Taylor is under fire on multiple fronts. According to the AP, he is also named as a defendant in a federal lawsuit filed in October in the U.S. District Court of North Carolina.

The situation is also growing worse for New Birth, which is under investigation by the U.S. Secret Service and the Internal Revenue Service for issues surrounding the seminars Taylor held at New Birth, according to federal officials.