

Megachurch Pastor Kong Hee Heads to Prison

City Harvest Church pastor Kong Hee is set to begin his jail sentence Friday.

"I am extremely saddened by the prospect of having to leave my family and church, and yearn to see them again after serving my sentence. However, I am ready to face what is to come with the peace and grace of God in my heart," Kong posted to Facebook recently.

Kong and other City Harvest Church leaders were found guilty of using a management company, Xtron, to financially support his wife, singer and CHC pastor Sun Ho, as she planned the release of an album in the United States. The church leaders were found guilty of misusing about \$50 million in church funds, including \$24 million to bolster Sun's career, *Charisma News* previously reported.

CHC leaders have been in and out of court for the last several years through the appeals process.

Kong's lawyers argued he genuinely believed the use of the funds was in the best interest of the church.

"I understand that the prosecution has filed a criminal reference to the Court of Appeal, so this case is not yet over. We will have to meet the prosecution's case when this is heard. I have consulted with my lawyers on this, and will leave the legal question to be resolved by the court. My future is, as always, in God's hands," Kong said.

Kong will serve three and a half years in prison, as opposed to the original eight years initially proposed.

"As I reflect on the prospect of starting my sentence, I wish

to thank all those who have supported me in one way or another in this difficult period, including the church and its members, my family and friends and other well-wishers. I would also like to thank my lawyers for their professionalism in their legal representation and for being so unselfish with their time.

“To all I have disappointed, stumbled and hurt in my congregation, in the body of Christ at large and in the public, I am truly sorry. I have made unwise decisions in the past that have led me to where I am today. I am filled with grief and regret over my mistakes and I sincerely ask for your forgiveness.

“Finally, and most importantly, to the members of City Harvest Church and to my beloved family, thank you for your unwavering love, prayers and support. I am sorry for putting you all unfairly through this painful ordeal. I will miss you very much. You will always be in my thoughts and prayers,” Kong said. {eoa}