

Pastor David Yonggi Cho Sentenced to 3 Years for Embezzling \$12 Million

Pastor David Yonggi Cho, 78, founder of the world's largest Pentecostal church, was sentenced to three years in prison for embezzling \$12 million in church monies.

Cho birthed the Yoido Full Gospel Church in South Korea, which is affiliated with the Assemblies of God, in 1958. The church has more than 1 million members, making it the largest congregation in the world.

Cho was convicted last week of embezzlement for having officials buy stocks his eldest son, Cho Hee-jun, owned in 2002. His officials bought 250,000 shares of the stock at four times the market value, according to news reports.

Cho has to pay about \$4.6 million in fines as part of the case. His son was also sentenced to three years in prison.

The Yonhap News Agency reported that the judge believes Cho should be severely punished for committing breach of trust, especially for a person of his status in society, but gave a light sentence for tax evasion because of Cho's positive contributions to society.