

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

**Acting United States Attorney Edward R. Ryan
Western District of North Carolina**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CHARLOTTE MINISTER INDICTED FOR INCOME TAX FRAUD, MAIL FRAUD, AND LYING TO FEDERAL AGENTS CHARLOTTE, NC - Acting U.S. Attorney Edward R. Ryan and Jeannine A. Hammett, Special Agent in Charge of the IRS Criminal Investigation Division in Charlotte, announced that on April 21, 2009, a federal grand jury returned a 14-count federal indictment charging Anthony L. Jinwright, 52, of Charlotte, NC with five counts of tax evasion, in violation of Title 26, United States Code, Section 7201, five counts of tax perjury, in violation of Title 26, United States Code, Section 7206(1), one count of lying to federal agents, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1001, and three counts of mail fraud, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1341.

The indictment alleges that from 2001 through at least 2006, Jinwright attempted to evade his federal tax obligations by failing to report more than \$800,000 in taxable income, including at least \$75,000 in income earned by his wife. The indictment further alleges that Jinwright owes between \$200,000 and \$400,000 in additional taxes for those years alone. According to the indictment, Jinwright has been the Senior Pastor at the Greater Salem Church, in Charlotte since 1981. Jinwright holds various degrees, including a Bachelor's Degree in Religious Education, a Master of Divinity, and a Doctorate of Ministry. In addition to serving as the pastor at Greater Salem, the indictment alleges that Jinwright owns and operates AL Jinwright Funeral Services in Charlotte. Jinwright is also the founder of AL Jinwright Ministries.

The indictment alleges that between 2001 and 2006, Jinwright received more than \$3.1 million in payments and reimbursements from Greater Salem and additional payments of more than \$400,000 through AL Jinwright Ministries. In addition, the indictment alleges that Jinwright's wife received in excess of \$835,000 from Greater Salem and another \$37,000 from outside speaking engagements.

The indictment alleges that Jinwright, with few exceptions, has consistently filed his tax returns late between 2000 and 2007 and that each of the returns for 2002 through at least 2006 substantially under reports income earned in those years. Specifically, the indictment charges that during those years, Jinwright reported just slightly more than \$1.1 million in adjusted gross income, whereas his true and correct adjusted gross income was nearly \$2 million. The indictment alleges that Jinwright knew that his returns were false because his personal expenditures during the years 2001 through 2006 far exceeded his reported taxable income. Among the personal purchases listed in the indictment are: the lease of luxury vehicles which required average annual lease payments of more than \$70,000; mortgage payments on two homes of between \$75,000 and almost \$100,000; personal living expenses, including utilities, lawn care, dry cleaning, house cleaning, and car washes totaling more than \$85,000 per year.

In addition to the tax crimes, the indictment also alleges that Jinwright engaged in mail fraud in connection with financing for several of his leased luxury vehicles. In particular, the indictment charges that on three separate occasions, Jinwright provided false financial information by fraudulently inflating his income in order to secure lease financing. The indictment alleges that on two loan applications submitted in 2006, Jinwright claimed that he earned \$100,000 per month, or \$1.2 million annually, whereas his income for that year, even including the omitted income, was substantially less than that amount, and the total amount of income he reported to the IRS did not exceed \$500,000 for either 2005 or 2006.

Similarly, the indictment alleges that Jinwright falsely inflated his annual income on a lease application submitted in 2002 where he fraudulently claimed that his income was \$60,000 per month, or \$720,000 annually, whereas his income for 2002, even including the omitted income, was substantially less than that amount and the total amount of income he reported to the IRS for 2002 did not exceed \$190,000.

Finally, the indictment charges that during the course of the investigation of this case, Jinwright lied to federal agents concerning his tax returns. Among other things, the indictment charges that Jinwright falsely told agents that he told his return preparer about all of his income and that all compensation received was reported on his federal tax returns whereas he withheld information about the types and amounts of his income from his return preparer U.S. Attorney Ryan noted that tax crimes continue to be crimes of opportunity, often committed by those most able to pay and least able to justify their conduct on the basis of need. "In this case, the indictment reflects that the defendant had earned ample income with which to pay his taxes but chose to have luxury cars and expensive homes, financed by the United States taxpayers. We will not allow tax crimes to go unpunished in this district and, with the continued cooperation with the Internal Revenue Service, we will aggressively investigate and prosecute those who view their obligation to pay taxes as a pay only if you are caught game."

An indictment contains allegations that a defendant has committed a crime. Every defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in court. Investigation of the case was conducted by the IRS-CI Division, and Assistant U.S. Attorneys David A. Brown and Thomas T. Cullen are handling the prosecution for the government.

If convicted, the defendant faces five years on each count of tax evasion (26 U.S.C. 7201), three years on each count of filing false tax returns (26 U.S.C. 7206(1)), five years for making false statements to federal agents (18 U.S.C. 1001), and up to 30 years for each count of mail fraud (18 U.S.C. 1341).

[Back](#)

[Print This Page](#)