



## IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **FEDERAL AUTHORITIES ARREST FORMER NEW JERSEY CHURCH CPA FOR EMBEZZLEMENT DONALD GRIDIRON JR. INDICTED FOR EMBEZZLING MILLIONS OF DOLLARS FROM AGAPE FAMILY WORSHIP CENTER**

**Rahway, New Jersey**, December 4, 2014 – U.S. Attorney Paul Fishman of the New Jersey District has charged Certified Public Accountant Donald Gridiron, JR. on federal charges of embezzling more than four million dollars from Agape Family Worship Center. Federal agents arrested Donald Gridiron, Jr. in Los Angeles on December 2, 2014.

The Agape Family Worship Center was shocked and disheartened following the discovery of the significant discrepancies involving the Church's finances as a result of the wrongful actions of the church's former CPA. Donald Gridiron, Jr. confessed to stealing nearly \$1.5 million dollars from Agape Family Worship Center but investigations revealed that he was dishonest in his confession and that the actual amount of the funds stolen exceeded \$4 million dollars.

The Church Board, acting with dispatch and prudence, immediately removed Donald Gridiron Jr. from access to the Church's finances and undertook further steps to ensure the security of the Church's assets, in order to protect the ministry from any further damage.

The Church further launched a thorough investigation and promptly commissioned the highly respected ministry accounting specialists, Guinn Smith and Company, to conduct an audit of the Church's books. Also, the church retained Jones, Davis & Jackson, PC, a multi-jurisdictional law firm with expertise in Church law and Church management matters.

Pastor Lawrence Powell expressed his dismay stating, "We were betrayed by a trusted certified public accounting professional who without authorization, secretly accessed our church financial accounts, improperly took millions of dollars, and then took systematic steps to cover up his dishonesty." Pastor Powell continued, "Professionally our former CPA violated the trust of the ministry and personally, I feel betrayed because this man used to be my friend. It hurts but we serve a God who will get us through this".

We want to assure our congregation, our members and all others in relationship with the Church that the operation of this ministry is continuing without interruption, and at the highest levels of integrity and diligence.

At all times during this process, we have maintained open communication and full cooperation with the necessary authorities, and will continue to do so as we proceed through the legal process.

“We are a loving church.” Pastor Powell emphasized. “We operate on God’s Kingdom principles. We are praying for our former CPA, Donald Gridiron Jr., and for God’s restorative blessings on the Agape Family Worship Center...”

**About Agape Family Worship Center**

The Agape Family Worship Center was originally founded as The Love Church in 1990 under the guidance of the Pastor Lawrence Powell. Since its humble beginning in the garage of Pastor Powell’s parents, Agape has grown tremendously and now has a congregation of nearly 5000 members. Agape sits on 6.5 acres of land, complete with a children and youth facility, a nursery, bookstore, the Pneuma Life School of Ministry, and a state of the art audio and video recording studio. Our mission is to proclaim and demonstrate the love of God to the World. For more information visit [www.Agapecenter.org](http://www.Agapecenter.org)

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