

# Alexandria pastor, wife charged with \$1.2 million congregation fraud scheme

By: [fox5dc.com staff](#) , [Lindsay Watts](#)

POSTED: OCT 24 2016 03:06PM EDT

UPDATED: OCT 25 2016 12:11AM EDT

**ALEXANDRIA, Va.** - An Alexandria pastor and his wife were **arrested** on Sunday for their alleged involvement in a \$1.2 million fraud scheme that victimized members of their congregation.

Terry Wayne Millender, 52, the senior pastor of [Victorious Life Church in Alexandria](#), along with his wife, Brenda, 56, and Grenetta Wells, 55, who is affiliated with the church, were indicted by a federal grand jury Thursday on charges of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and **money** laundering conspiracy.

The charges were released Monday after Wells was arrested. The Millenders and Wells operated a **company** called Micro-Enterprise Management Group, a Virginia company that alleged to help poor people in developing countries by providing small, short-term loans to start or expand existing businesses by working with a network of established micro-finance institutions, according to a press release.

Terry and Brenda Millender were founding members of MEMG, and Wells served as chief operating officer. They recruited **investors** by emphasizing its [Christian mission](#) and use of the funds to help the poor, promising guaranteed rates of return, assuring investors that the loans' principal was safe and backed by the assets of MEMG, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office. The indictment claims some investors gave the Millenders sums totaling \$40,000, \$50,000, \$84,000 and \$400,000.

The money was allegedly used by the trio to conduct risky trading on the foreign exchange currency market, options trading, payments toward the purchase of a \$1.75 million residence for the Millenders and other personal expenses for the defendants, said the U.S. Attorney's Office. In an effort to conceal how they had actually used the money, the defendants allegedly assured investors that they would get their money back and blamed delays in repaying investors on the 2008 financial crisis.

FOX 5 spoke to a former member of Millender's church who said there have been rumors for years about financial misconduct.

"It didn't really come as a shock – it was more of a sigh of relief," Eric Brown said of the **arrests**.

Brown said his own family invested thousands of dollars into their pastor's "business." But they are not part of the federal case.

"I asked him like, 'Hey, that's a nice car,'" Brown recalled. "He said, 'Yeah, \$100,000 car. If you save up your money, God's going to bless you.' Come to find out now, it was actually part of our money."

Outside the courthouse on Monday, Drew Hutcheson, the pastor's attorney, said, "There was a prior investigation that went inactive as far as I was concerned or understood about a year and a half ago. And this indictment was just issued and the case is back on the government's radar." He continued to say, "I think that some people were motivated to get in touch with law enforcement, probably members had made some investments and wondered where they had gone."

Terri Millender was held without **bond** until a hearing on Wednesday along with Grenetta Wells, who according to the indictment had previously been sentenced and convicted for defrauding investors in a \$1 million Ponzi scheme.

[Victorious Life Church](#) would meet for services on Sundays at West Potomac High School.