

D.C. Area Pastor, Wife Convicted of Embezzling \$2 Million From the Poor

A D.C. area pastor and his wife were convicted of embezzling nearly \$2 million through a organization they claimed would help the poor.

Victorious Life Church's Terry Wayne Millender and his wife, Brenda, ran an investment company called Micro-Enterprise Management Group.

MEMG 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 the Department of Justice.

The *Alexandria Times* reports the jury found the Millenders' representation of the company to be false and fraudulent. Instead of their alleged mission, the couple was using the money to take part in risky trading on the foreign exchange currency market, options trading, payments to the purchase of a \$ million residence and other personal expenses.

Terry told the jury he acted "stupidly, not criminally—not from my heart."

The Washington Post reports Terry says he forewent running a successful restaurant recommendation business to follow his calling to lead a church and a Christian-focused investment firm. To truly make a difference, he said, he needed to not just give what he could to charity but make enough money to give significantly.

"You can't do good and be poor at the same time," he testified. "You can't help the poor and be poor; it makes no

sense.”

Those who knew the couple and the church were not surprised by the charges.

“It didn’t really come as a shock—it was more of a sigh of relief,” former church member Eric Brown told a Fox affiliate.

The Washington Post reports Terry was found guilty for all 31 counts of wire fraud, money laundering, false-tax-return filing and obstruction. Brenda was found guilty of seven charges.

“I’m pleased that the jury’s verdict at least acknowledges a vast difference between Mr. and Mrs. Millender’s respective involvement,” Brenda Millender’s lawyer, Lana Manitta, said. “However, our position is and will remain that Brenda Millender wasn’t involved at any level that triggers criminal culpability.”

The Millenders face up to 20 years in prison each when they are sentenced in March.