

A penny saved

Jim and Mardi Maxwell

by Herb Gunn

In these days of economic uncertainty, when everybody is pinching their pennies, Jim and Mardi Maxwell have some solid financial advice: Don't.

The couple were honored as Investors of the Year at the 17th annual Evening for Economic Justice, sponsored by the Michigan Interfaith Trust Fund on November 5. The Maxwells were characteristically humble in accepting the award, and they pointed to influences in their lives that led them to socially responsible investment habits.

"Thank you for this wonderful honor given to us for doing what we should be doing anyway. We have been glad to be investors for the past 15 or 16 years. It's our privilege to give a share," Jim Maxwell said. "To be investors is not too different from catching a cold; you don't always know how it happens, but at some point you ask, 'Where'd I get that?'"

Maxwell explained that one of the strongest influences on people who decide to invest at zero, one, or two percent annual interest so that others have access to low interest loans grows from personal relationships.

"It's who you know," Maxwell said. He named a number of people, including Bishop H. Coleman McGehee for whom the initial fund was named and who was in attendance, who influenced their early commitments to the economic justice movement of the 1980s.

Maxwell also underscored a scriptural foundation to their investment decisions.



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would be, when people were complaining about having lost money in the stock markets, to say 'Hey, you should have your money in the McGehee Fund.'"

Maxwell also explained the importance of just making the commitment and living into it.

"You never really miss money when you take it off the top because it's not really yours anyway. That is one of the principles that guides us when we make our decisions. We decided to go right to our savings and take a chunk of that money and put it into the McGehee and the Interfaith Trust Fund. I would encourage others to do that as a way of sharing the gifts that God has given to all of us to be servants in this world, especially to those who need us to see the world through their eyes."

"Many of our investors, like Jim and Mardi, are quiet, unassuming people going about doing good in this world without any need for recognition," said Jane Carpenter, director of Investor Relations. "We try to recognize them. We need others to know that there are many people in this diocese who are doing the same kind of good works with all of the gifts they have received from God. The Interfaith Trust Fund is one of those recipients of their gifts and we are fortunate to have such committed investors."

"I always try to see the world through the eyes of the poor because, as a religious person and a Christian, that's the way we should always see the world," he said.

There is a practical side to their investment strategy. Jim explained that he and Mardi opened a variety of mutual funds when their children approached college age.

"Over the years, there are ups and downs in mutual funds," he said. "In the year 2001 and the year 2008, the Michigan Interfaith Trust Fund, formerly the McGehee Fund for Economic Justice, was actually our greatest investment in terms of returns because we received zero percent and in everything else, we received less. We were thinking how wonderful it

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