



# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



Jean-Michel Etienne, Ph.D. This article is written by Rachel Linares, NJC Planned Giving and Trust Services



## Stewarding your Estate

During your lifetime, you may work 40 years to accumulate assets and spend 10 to 20 years conserving that accumulation. Through good planning, this lifetime of assets can be used to care for your family members and can become a tool to share the love of Jesus, even after you are no longer able to do so yourself. For too many people there has been little planning or sometimes no planning and their last chapter is burdensome for family members.

The stewardship of estate planning helps you create legacy of love and care for your family, your friends, and your community, that can be encouraging and even inspiring. The Bible tells us, "If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than and unbeliever." (1 Timothy 5:8 (NIV), so we know that this topic is important.

### The Spirit of Prophecy says the following regarding Wills:

"Many are not exercised upon the subject of making their wills while they are in apparent health. But this precaution should be taken by our brethren. They should know their financial standing and should not allow their business to become entangled. They should arrange their property in such a manner that they may leave it at any time." Counsels on Stewardship, 327-328; Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 4: 482; Testimony Treasures, Vol. 1:560

### What is a Will and Do You Really Need One?

Your will is a written document, signed by you and by two or more witnesses. In some states, your signature must be witnessed by a notary public.

If you do not have a will, the court will follow state law for those without a will. Many of the court decisions might be completely contrary to your desires.

For example, without a valid will, a judge might choose guardians for your minor children, select trustees to manage your property and even award property to your distant relatives. With a valid will, you can choose who will inherit your property and who will administer your estate as executor or personal representative. If you have minor children, you can choose a person to raise your children. A valid will is an essential part of transferring your property at the right time to the right people at the lowest cost. Without a valid will, costs, delays, and the probability of expensive conflicts and processes increase.

### How can I use my Will to spread the Gospel?

One of the simplest ways for you to make a future gift to a charitable organization is through your will.



Here are several ways you leave a gift to benefit a ministry in your Will.

- You can leave a bequest of a fixed dollar amount to your church, the NJ conference, your local Adventist school, or another charitable institution of your choice.
- You can also give a percentage of your estate, which allows you to divide the remainder of your estate (leftover assets after all debts and gifts paid) regardless of its size.
- Your gift can be contingent - that is, the funds will go to a certain individual if that person survives you. If not, they would be paid to the charitable organization of your choice.
- An alternative is to create a trust through your will, which would pay an income to a beneficiary for life, with the remaining principal to be given to the charitable organization at the time of death.

Usually, a gift without restriction is the most useful because it allows charitable organizations to apply the funds to the most pressing needs. But you also have the right to specify in your will how the funds are to be used. Many people desire to leave funds for evangelism, youth ministries, or other causes that are close to their hearts. If you wish to do this, you are urged to consult with the leadership of the charitable organization before you execute your will to make certain the conditions are ones the charitable organization can meet.

### How can you create your own Estate Plan?

The New Jersey Conference Department of Planned Giving and Trust Services staff can provide information to guide you through the process of estate planning, removing uncertainties and helping you ensure your desires are carried out. For members who wish to give something towards the spreading of the gospel through their estate, PGTS can help them create a gift plan that is customized to the needs of their family.

For help getting started with estate planning, including Wills, Trusts, Powers of Attorney, and Health directives, contact us today at 609-802-0864, or visit our website at [www.njcsda.org/trust-services](http://www.njcsda.org/trust-services)



"... The more we invest in the cause of God to aid in the salvation of souls, the closer to our hearts will they be brought." Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 3:405;

E. C. White, Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3:405; Testimony Treasures, Vol. 1:386